Reid Hoffman Blogs Compilation

Content: https://www.reidhoffman.org/

Credits: Hassan Bhatti (insert blog link)

ARTICLE: TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENTS AND LEARNINGS FROM JEFF WEINER'

Last month, my friend Jeff Weiner stepped down as CEO of LinkedIn after 11 amazing years. In his final all-hands meeting as CEO, I and many other LinkedIn team members spoke about what Jeff has meant to us, and the important lessons we have learned from him over those years. I want to share some of the key things I learned from our long partnership, both because I think theyll be valuable to a broader audience, but also because they are a fitting tribute to an amazing leader and friend.'

My Blitzscaling co-author and friend Chris Yeh helped me record a Greymatter podcast episode where I share some of the great memories of and learnings from working with Jeff. The following essay is a condensed version of that conversation.'

I met Jeff through one of my other partners at Greylock, James Slavet, who had worked for him at Yahoo.James said he was one of the best executives hed ever seen, and told me, You will really love Jeff Weiner.When you get that kind of reference from someone that you think is amazing themselves, as is the case with James, you should track that person carefully. So I met Jeff at a dinner organized by Adam Lashinsky, and a few weeks later, we met for a late lunch and talked for a couple of hours.Afterwards, Jeff asked me to address his team at Yahoo.Jeff was responsible for the Yahoo Network and many of the companys consumer-facing properties. I gave a critique of Yahoos products and strategy, and explained all the things that I thought Yahoo should do differently.'

Jeffs reaction was perfect and telling he was intellectually curious rather than defensive. He showed an intensity of curiosity and learning, especially towards being what I call an infinite learner.And, he wanted his people to talk and interact more than he did, which reflects Jeffs focus on leading the team, as well as being a part of the team. After that, we started regularly grabbing dinners.When he later left Yahoo, he joined Greylock as an EIR.'

Jeff is driven, strategic, and smart. So, naturally when Jeff left Yahoo, he had a plan for his next play.I had to convince him that LinkedIn was a better plan than his original plan. In initial conversations, Jeff thought he might contribute better as a board member and give me advice.In reply, I argued, No, I really think you should stop paying attention to this other thing and work on LinkedIn full time.'

Important to making any key hire is to really invest the time.Even though Jeff and I already knew each other, we had not worked together.To assess and establish that wed form a good partnership, I felt we needed to spend a lot of time discussing how wed work together, what we thought were our (and each others) strengths and weaknesses, mistakes wed made and what wed learned, and what wed do differently.If you added it up, it was about 30 hours of conversations.Some of these were deliberately difficult conversations, like What were some of the things you really screwed up?The questions went both ways, because we were looking to build a partnership.'

And then, even though I knew Jeff already and even though I spent a great 30 hours talking with Jeff, I also dug into a set of other references. Why?One important reason: the way a person interacts with you might be very different from how they interact with other people.'

Sometimes you dont have the luxury to do everything that I did with Jeff, but that is the aspirational goal.The end result of those discussions: Jeff joined.Jeff is one of the spectacular tech CEOs, and in his storybook run, he took LinkedIn from 400 employees to a global leader with over 16,000 employees.Jeff was the architect of all of that.'

I learned a lot by observing Jeff.If I ever had to do it again, Id do a much better job thanks to what I learned from him.Not only is he an infinite learner, but hes also an explicit learner, someone who shares his knowledge and teaches others.Part of the joy of working with Jeff that hes constantly teaching, saying why hes doing what hes doing, and what hes thinking about as he makes those decisions.The following are just a few of those key lessons.'

Jeff says that you build trust through consistency over time. I completely agree with this, and would add that another key way to build trust is navigating conflict together. When we see that we can handle conflict together, we know that if we run into conflict again, we can raise it easily, navigate it, and use any crises we run into to become better partners, to become better learners, and to become more trusting of each other.'

Until Covid struck, Jeff and I still had monthly dinners, where we would make sure we were aligned on the mission and the impact that LinkedIn has on the world. This let us think about the macro strategy environment, whereas we would use meetings during the week for tactics and solving specific problems.'

Another key lesson is that superstars are not all the same. Everyone has a different set of strengths and weaknesses. People have different superpowers. One of Jeffs superpowers is creating a culture of compassionate management AND performance.Embedding individual performance metrics in team performance metrics is a central part of how Jeff operates, but he also concerns himself with setting a cultural drumbeat and making everyone feel part of the team.One of the things Jeff said that stuck in my mind was that by the time that you're getting bored of yourself saying a message, your organization is just beginning to hear it.It's like a version of my maxim, If you're not embarrassed by your first product release, you've released too late.This maxim is to show you the point of speed: where your barometer is potentially set well if the speed makes you uncomfortable. In parallel, Jeffs maxim is that youre only beginning to be heard by the organization once you are bored by the thing youre saying over and over so dont stop!You have to override your own instincts for the good of the mission. (If youd like to learn more about how Jeff practices compassionate management and sets a cultural drumbeat, you can tune into his episode on my podcast Masters of Scale.)"

A final thing that Jeff's a master of is staying in touch with the pulse of the business.He constructed a set of dashboards, which bubble the metrics of the whole organization through him, giving him incredible insights. For example, about six months into his time as CEO, he got up at five in the morning to review the numbers and saw something he didnt understand.So he called the product lead and said, There's something wrong with your product. The product lead was surprised and asked, What do you mean?Jeff said, Theres something wrong. This number doesnt cohere with all the other numbers.And the only reason this would happen is because there's something wrong with your product.The product team investigated, and it turned out that the email notification engine had quit and wasn't sending out email notifications, and the error was reflected in that specific number Jeff questioned.The point here is not micromanagement, which Jeff does not do. Rather, the point of the dashboards was to provide a comprehensive view that everyone could see, architect your work processes with those dashboards, and develop the kind of fine awareness that lets you see when a number is just wrong."

I think it was Jack Dorsey that first came up with the concept of multiple founding moments. I thought that was very smart, so I thought about it and developed it further.The reason a company has multiple founding moments is because ultimately companies succeed and thrive when they are being driven by someone who has a missionary passion for what the company should grow into, and what impact it should have on the world.'

When a company no longer has active co-founders, the professional managers running it will focus on business metrics EBITDA, revenue, CAC, LTV business-oriented MBA stuff.The problem is that over time, this approach tends to overlook the true long-term opportunities and threats.When I invest in founders, I'm investing without knowing what the exact return on capital will be. I don't know the exact amount something might add to our bottom line, but I do know that the right thing for a vibrant, healthy company, its customers, and its employees is to have the right product or service for its market."

The mistake people frequently make in recruiting CEOs rather than later-stage co-founders is that they focus on bringing in the best corporate athlete, rather than hiring someone where the companys mission was an integral part of their life story.A co-founder thinks, I want this company to last for decades, or even centuries, and for the impact it has on the world to be a major part of the story of how I made the world a better place.This is so important that I wrote an essay on how to hire a CEO as a later-stage co-founder.To achieve these lofty goals, the great companies have to reinvent themselves over and over, and that takes a founder, not a manager.When Gil Amelio ran Apple, he built a strategy around delivering DSUV an awkward acronym for distinctly superior user value.The result was an uninspiring motto that called for Apple to create a confusingly broad product line in an attempt to serve every market.When Steve Jobs returned to Apple to replace Amelio, he threw all that out and focused instead on making things that were insanely great, an inspiring goal that allowed Apple to focus on a narrow and clear set of products, starting Apples remarkable comeback.Amelio had been a successful CEO before joining Apple, but at that critical moment, the company needed a founder, not a conventional CEO.'

Jeffs dedication to LinkedIns mission is what made him a co-founder. Not only did he have the ability to drive the company forward, but the company mission was a core part of how he wanted to make meaning and make the world a better place. This showed up in how Jeff recruited people to LinkedIn.His pitch wasnt, Come work for me. It was, Come work together *with* me on this mission.'

I actually surprised Jeff when I first called him a co-founder.I think we were on a press call, and I said it without really thinking about it.The term was the best way to reflect what Jeff was actually doing, which was creating a company with amazing culture and performance.He didnt become a co-founder because I said so, he did so because of the things he did every day.'

When I wrote The Alliance with Ben Casnocha and Chris Yeh, one of our core goals was to explain how to recruit, manage, and retain great employees in a world where almost no one spends their entire career at a single company.We focused on the concept of a Tour of Duty an alliance between company or manager and employee that laid out a specific, finite mission to accomplish, which would transform the business and accelerate the employees career.'

When we shared a rough draft of the book with Jeff, he pushed back. I think your arguments are right, he said, But I think youre overlooking the important role played by a core of employees who truly believe that the company represents their lifes work.That kind of core brings many benefits, from carrying a strong culture, to being able to discuss and debate decisions faster thanks to the shorthand built from many years of working together.The irony isnt lost on me that Jeff, whom I brought into the company many years after its incorporation, was reminding me about the importance of foundational employees! But as usual, Jeff was right, so we added the concept of a foundational tour of duty, and it strengthened the book.'

Chris and I also put a lot of the lessons I learned from Jeff into my most recent book Blitzscaling. Blitzscaling is all about achieving enduring leadership in a winner-take most market by prioritizing speed over efficiency in the face of uncertainty.The interesting thing is that Jeff did such an amazing job of building dashboards and monitoring LinkedIns business that we were able to remove much of the uncertainty from the equation.To the outside world, it looked like we were blitzscaling, but inside the company, we were actually fastscaling, which is what we call prioritizing speed over efficiency, but within a low-uncertainty environment.So even though Jeff wasnt technically blitzscaling, we were able to draw on his lessons to explain the ins and outs of rapid scale, such as how you should go from a single office to a global company with many offices throughout the world.'

Once LinkedIn was public, one of the things I learned from Jeff was how to keep the business innovative.Jeff decided to allocate 70% of the companys energy to the core business, 20% to adjacent businesses, and 10% to true venture bets.One of those bets, which blitzscaled successfully, was LinkedIns publishing platform.A number of team members including Ryan Roslansky (who just took over as CEO) realized that LinkedIn could be a platform where leaders and executives could practice thought leadership for a business audience.They pitched Jeff on it, and he told them to run with it, to great success.Of course, Jeff refused to take any credit. One of Jeffs many great characteristics as a CEO is that he tries to co-own any failures, while trying to downplay the credit he deserves for successes. His leadership goal isnt glory for him, but glory for the team.'

One of Jeffs most important final acts of leadership as CEO was passing the torch to Ryan Roslansky.Another great lesson I learned from Jeff was the importance of having multiple succession plans for every executive one for an immediate emergency successor, one for a year down the road, and one for the long-term. Ryan was Jeffs long-term succession plan. He was Jeffs first hire after arriving at LinkedIn, and had worked for him at Yahoo for five years before that, so they have a very strong and lasting alliance. More importantly however, choosing Ryan reflected a strategic choice about what truly drives LinkedIns business. While engineering, marketing, sales, operations, and finance are all critical, for a consumer software business like LinkedIn, the most important strategic driver is nearly always product. Ryan was and is an amazing product leader for LinkedIn.'

In my first conversation with Ryan after he learned he would be succeeding Jeff, it took less than a minute before I thought again to myself, This is why Ryan is the right CEO. Ryan basically said, there's no way I'm going to be a better Jeff. If I try to do what Jeff would have done, with no differences, I will, by definition, do it worse than Jeff would have. I need to take the great things that Jeff has done here, and then add in new and different things. Ryan is a classic infinite learner, so we spent that conversation discussing both the macro situation and some specific strategies he had in mind."

For Jeffs final all-hands meeting as CEO, Ryan Roslansky asked to run the meeting. What Jeff didnt realize was that the entire meeting was planned out as a tribute. We had new employee onboarding also partially focused on appreciation of Jeff. If you read this LinkedIn post from Jeff, youd know that his favorite karaoke song is Neil Diamonds Sweet Caroline. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, members of the team from all around the world recorded a group performance singing and instruments of Sweet Caroline, with footage of Jeff mixed in. They called it #ThankYouJeff.'

Thats when Jeff started crying. I started tearing up too, because it was such a testament to the culture that he built. It was far more personal and emotional than some recounting of revenue growth or user count. And Jeffs reaction demonstrated both his style of leadership and deep connection with the team.'

Then, Ryan, myself, our CFO Steve Sordello, and eight other executives shared a transformational moment wed experienced and learned from Jeff. For my part, I shared some of the thoughts that Ive shared in this essay, notably why Jeff was truly a co-founder of LinkedIn.'

Now that he has passed the torch to Ryan, Jeff is replacing me as Executive Chairman. He will focus on helping Ryan and the rest of the companys leadership team manifest LinkedIns vision of creating economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce, and the belief that equal talent should have equal access to opportunity. Its very obvious that as a society, we have some serious issues with living up to our ideals of fairness to all. If youre not part of the solution, youre part of the problem.And if were going to implement such solutions at LinkedIn, we will need strong support from the top.Jeff will be taking over my old chairmans office and Ill find another office nearby so that Ryan, Jeff, and I can continue to work together for many years to come to accomplish our shared mission for LinkedIn.'

Last month, Jeff Weiner stepped down as CEO of LinkedIn after 11 amazing years. In this essay and accompanying podcast, I share some of my favorite memories and most valuable lessons learned from working with Jeff.'

ARTICLE: IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC, IN GATES WE TRUST'

Even as reports of a new viral outbreak in China started popping up during the first weeks of 2020, most people were slow to pay sufficient attention to the developing threat. In contrast, Bill and Melinda Gates acted decisively and quickly. On January 29th, the Gates Foundation pledged $10 million to help frontline responders in China and Africa accelerate their efforts to contain the global spread.'

Then, less than a week later, the Gates Foundation upped its pledge to $100 million, upped its pledge to $100 million, an exponential increase that reflects the new reality we live in: In the 21st century, its not just opportunities and good ideas that spread at warp speed. Massive threats do too. Thats why we have to meet such challenges with massive resources, deployed sooner rather than later. Speed saves.'

Bill and Melinda reacted to the emergence of this new coronavirus quicker than most because they recognized it as a threat theyd been studying closely. If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, Bill exclaimed in a 2015 TED Talk, its most likely to be a highly infectious virus, rather than a war.'

With the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and 2015, people got so sick so fast that they were typically bedridden by the time they were contagious. In Bills estimation, the worlds response to that threat shows how under-prepared we were for pandemics. But what really concerned him was something more like the Spanish Flu of 1918 than Ebola i.e., a disease where you might still feel well enough to go to work when you were already contagious. In the modern world, where daily transport levels are roughly 50 times more than they were a century ago, such a disease could have devastating impact.'

So when Bill saw certain patterns emerging in China, he knew there was no time to waste.'

In the case of our national response to coronavirus, America was hampered by a President who proclaimed that the coronavirus would go away on its own, with little intervention. But even if hed had more knowledge about the fundamentals of epidemiology, and if hed shown more competence in directing the resources he had at his disposal, knowledge and competence alone are no longer enough to effectively combat the spread of pandemics. In our globally connected world, a slow response means catastrophic loss. A moderate response means near-catastrophic loss. Extremely fast responsiveness is mission-critical.'

And thats a key reason why non-profit organizations like the Gates Foundation are indispensable to global health and security now.'

For decades, weve seen how the Foundations combination of non-profit status and substantial resources gives it the capacity to take on long-term, seemingly intractable problems that, for a variety of reasons, the private sector and the public sector alike fail to prioritize.'

But over the last four months, weve also seen how a well-resourced, well-run NGO can act quickly in the face of immediate crisis.'

The Gates Foundation is large enough that it can effectively intervene on a global level, and yet also nimble enough that it can do so extremely quickly. Its streamlined nature makes it more responsive than most governments. Its emphasis on impact and social good rather than profits means it can act with less concern for potential financial ramifications than even the most service-oriented for-profit companies.'

So in the early days and weeks of the pandemic, when our own federal government seemed largely paralyzed or in denial about how to respond to the rapid global spread of the disease, the Gates Foundation continued to escalate its investments.'

In every announcement of its efforts, the Foundation emphasized speed. In February, for example, heres what it said about its second round of funding: The release of fast and flexible funding is intended to help multilateral organizations and national public health authorities rapidly scale up their virus detection capabilities and implement disease modeling analytics so that they can target resources where they can have the greatest impact in arresting disease spread. This funding is intended to help public health authorities cover the initial cost of labor and supplies while international agencies and national governments appropriate the resources necessary to fund ongoing operations.'

In April, when it announced an additional $150 million commitment, it explained that it would also leverage its $2.5 billion Strategic Investment Fund to catalyze the rapid procurement of essential medical supplies and help life sciences companies secure financing to produce COVID-19 products.'

In a recent Vox.com article about the Gates Foundations coronavirus work, Stanford professor Rob Reich noted how hes described philanthropy in the past as a distinctive source of risk capital for long time horizons.'

In this respect, organizations like the Gates Foundation can make investments in early-stage technologies where significant capital is needed, but where the potential for profit if any at all--is still very far down the road. In funding the initial research in these cases, well-capitalized non-profits can then help determine if additional funding from governments and for-profit investors is warranted.'

But in the new world, their capacity for speed emerges as an equally strong superpower, alongside their patience and their capacity for risk. Consider, for example, how Bill recently explained his vision of building seven factories in parallel in pursuit of a coronavirus vaccine to Trevor Noah, the host ofThe Daily Show: Even though well end up picking at most two of them, were going to fund factories for all seven just so we dont waste time in serially saying Okay, which vaccine works? and then building the factoryItll be a few billion dollars well waste on manufacturing for the constructs that dont get picked because something else is better. But a few billion in the situation were in, where theres trillions of dollars...being lost economically, it is worth it.'

As Vox.com details, The Gates Foundation wont fund those seven factories entirely by itself. Instead, its seeking a range of national and multilateral stakeholders who are funding the development of vaccines for COVID-19 to partner with on this effort.'

Thats because even the world's largest charitable organizations, like The Gates Foundation, cannot match the resources that well-funded governments and the worlds largest for-profit companies can bring to the table. But imagine how long it might take Congress to pass a bill to fund a project where the goal at the start is to produce five billion-dollar factories that wont actually be used. Imagine a for-profit company trying to rationalize that project to its board or shareholders. While Bills plan to build factories in parallel will only come to fruition if governments and for-profits play major roles, the idea might never have even been proposed unless an entity like The Gates Foundation was there to kick-start it with advocacy and funding."

At a time when accelerating innovation is crucial, both to save lives and to help us achieve conditions where its genuinely safe to resume more normal levels of economic activity, The Gates Foundation is repeatedly playing the role of catalytic collaborator.'

In addition, Bill supported the Seattle Flu Study, which launched in 2019 to learn how the flu and other respiratory illnesses spread through local communities. The team has now expanded its efforts to test for coronavirus as well. In late February, their testing quickly revealed a positive case where the individual in question had no recent travel history, providing the first documented evidence of community spread within the U.S.'

In March, the Gates Foundation launched the Covid-19 Therapeutics Accelerator in collaboration with the U.K.-based foundation Wellcome and Mastercard. In less than two months, the Accelerator has granted $20 million to identify and develop potential treatments for COVID-19 through research being conducted by the University of Washington, the University of Oxford, and the La Jolla Institute for Immunology.'

Bill himself continues to serve as one of our leading public voices during this crisis, by sharing his optimistic but informed perspective on how we should navigate the current moment. In the current atmosphere, as thousands of people die each day and millions grapple with how to pay their bills, all while a highly contentious campaign season is playing out, our need for steady, rational, fact-driven information is paramount. A complex challenge faces us. We need to rapidly improve public healthcare infrastructure and develop effective treatments for Covid-19. At the same time, we have to be mindful of our economys health, and take prudent but active measures to improve it where possible.'

In this respect, Bills track record makes him uniquely suited for this challenge. Hes both one of the most successful CEOs in history, a business leader who pioneered the most economically generative and culturally transformational industry of his era. And, as a second act, hes become, in partnership withMelinda and their Foundation, a global health leader whose work has helped save more than 122 million lives over the last two decades. We are extremely fortunate to have his expertise and his guidance in this moment.'

In our globally connected world, a slow response to pandemics means catastrophic loss. A moderate response means near-catastrophic loss. Extremely fast responsiveness is mission-critical. Thats a key reason why non-profit organizations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are indispensable to global health and security now, and why Bill Gates is accelerating the search for coronavirus treatments and cures.'

ARTICLE: MY 2020 VISION FOR GRADUATES: HOW TO BE OPTIMISTIC IN TERRIBLE TIMES '

Shortly after I graduated from college in 1990, America entered a recession. The unemployment rate peaked at 7.3 percent in 1991. That same year, the U.S. experienced a record number of murders.'

The world was also in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. Tens of thousands of people around the world were dying from a virus there was no cure for.'

My generation, dubbed GenerationX after a popular novel of the same name, was typically characterized as being aimless and cynical, prematurely embittered by dead-end jobs, the generally awful state of the world, and an overall sense of cultural exhaustion.'

In other words, compared to you guys, we had it pretty sweet.'

Congratulations, class of 2020. As the title of a movie from my early post-college years puts it, Reality bites.'

In 2020, entering the real world means staying at home, sheltering in place. Finding your dream job never an easy endeavor is exponentially harder in an environment where any job is hard to come by.'

Obviously, this is not the best time to be making a major life transition its a terrible time. But it is your time to do this, so you have to try to make the best of it.'

And one thing we can say with certainty about the current moment is that no one really knows whats going to happen as we move forward from here.'

Society as a whole experienced cataclysmic shock. Things we assumed were indelible, immutable parts of our lives are suddenly no longer parts of our lives.'

Is it temporary? Is it ongoing?'

In many ways, your generation will be the ones who end up determining this the most. How much change will you tolerate? How much change will you demand?'

In moments of uncertainty, in moments of great change and even chaos, we all have the instinct to hunker down and cling to the familiar, the known, the predictable, the things were comfortable with.'

That makes perfect sense. And in this particular instance, by all means, hunkering down and maintaining social distance is saving lives. Keep doing that.'

But keep looking forward too.'

When we talk about what happens next, we often frame the conversation in reactive terms. We talk about getting back to work. We talk about a return to normalcy.'

In my opinion, thats the wrong orientation.'

We should be thinking in terms of moving forward.'

As the saying goes, Never let a good crisis go to waste.'

At first glance, that might sound cynical. Opportunistic.'

But I believe its an incredibly optimistic, idealistic, and resilient way to look at the world.'

It recognizes that forces that create chaos and confusion also upend deeply rooted habits and patterns of behavior -- the status quo that often block potential innovations and more productive ways of living.'

Now, with so much in flux, where do we go from here? Who flourishes?'

In a quote thats often attributed to Charles Darwin but was in fact a Louisiana State University management professor paraphrasing Darwin in 1963, It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.'

And that, I would say, is your superpower at the moment.'

Youre young. You havent been living your adult life a specific way for ten, twenty, forty years.'

This is not to say you dont have huge challenges ahead of you. Or significant obligations, expectations, and dreams that pre-date this new moment we find ourselves in. Because Im sure that you do.'

Theres a good chance youve got student debt. You may have achieved a certain level of training and expertise in a field that no longer seems as viable as it did just a few months ago.'

But meeting this new world with an adaptive mindset right now is critical. And as a person who is most likely in their 20s, youre at a more adaptive point in your life than those who are both younger and older than you.'

You have a level of autonomy and thus a capacity to make your own way that those younger than you dont yet have. You have a receptivity to new approaches that those older than you will likely have a harder time summoning.'

So how, then, do you make the most of this crisis?'

Here is the language of standard commencement speeches:'

Trust your heart.'

Listen to your inner voice.'

Follow your intuition.'

Even in the best times, I think this is insufficient advice.'

In our current moment, its extremely insufficient advice.'

I mean, I get it. Even in the best of times, Graduation Day is a moment of great transition and uncertainty. You're giving up your familiar identity as a college student. You're on the verge of assuming some new, probably not-quite clear identity as an adult professional."

You're about to embark on a journey through unknown and potentially inhospitable territory. You're going to have to say goodbye to old friends and a familiar way of life and hello to new living arrangements, new routines, and probably new student loan bills."

So you need a resounding celebration of self, to shore yourself up for the journey. That means you focus on your heart, your inner voice, the unique glory and magic of you.'

Here's the thing, though. While you should trust your heart, you should also get a second opinion. While you should follow your intuition, don't just follow it reflexively talk to the smartest people you know to get the lay of the land."

But so what am I really saying here? Instead of optimism, I preach pessimism? When others say hope, I say fear?'

Absolutely not! In this moment, you must be optimistic. Bold. Passionate.Idealistic. There are hard times ahead, and you will need those emotions to power you through them.'

But also be strategic and intentional. Dispassionate even. Whats the best move for you right now, given current circumstances and opportunities? Instead of sticking with a single vision for your life, be willing to experiment.'

That doesnt mean leap before you look, though. Just the opposite. Plan.'

Now, were all moving forward into largely unmapped territories. But thats why preparation and information-gathering matter most. You have to learn as much as you can ahead of time. Whats the weather going to be like? What kinds of threats should you be prepared for? Bears? Deserts? Mountain passes that are all but impossible to cross in the winter?'

My point is that making progress in life is never just about your passion and your confidence. Or even your grit and your specific skills. It's also about how well you foresee, comprehend, and react to prevailing conditions in the world around you."

To elaborate on what I mean here, let me tell you a story from my own career.'

A while back, a reporter asked me if passing on a chance to become the first lead outside investor in Facebook was the biggest mistake Id ever made in my professional life.'

Well, that was a pretty big mistake.'

But I thought about it for a while and I told the reporter, No. That actually wasnt the biggest. The biggest happened much earlier in my career, in 1995.'

At that point I was a few years into my career and working as a project manager at Apple. And then I got a job offer from Fujitsu. Im sure it sounds unbelievable today, but in 1995, Fujitsu was a much bigger company than Apple.About twelve times bigger. So getting an offer from them was exciting.'

The job they were offering was better too. It had a lot more responsibility than my Apple job did. It had a fancier-sounding title: Product Manager. It came with a big raise.So naturally I took it. What a mistake!'

Not because Fujitsu was a bad place to work. It turned out to be a good place to work.'

But taking that job meant I stopped thinking about another option I was lightly considering at the time but never ended up pursuing.'

That option involved trying to get a job at a young Silicon Valley company that had just gone public and would, in a few short years, crash and burn, lay off everyone, and quickly fade into oblivion. Yes, I passed up all that. And I regret it to this day.'

Why? Because that company was Netscape, the company that released the first widely adopted web browser. And my dream was to create some kind of software product that could positively impact people's lives at massive scale."

I wasn't exactly sure what this software would do yet. I just knew that subscription-based dial-up services like CompuServe and America Online, and the one I'd been working on at Apple, eWorld, could potentially distribute information in far more powerful ways than what you could do with books, TV, and other traditional forms of media."

At the same time, I was beginning to realize that the Internet was fundamentally different from closed, proprietary online services like CompuServe or eWorld. It was a much, much bigger deal -- a new, open, incredibly generative way of connectingand empowering people.'

Already, thousands of people had started creating their own globally accessible web pages focused on whatever they wanted. They were posting constantly updated photos of their coffee pots. They were publishing lists of their favorites Beatles songs. They were selling hot sauce.'

One guy named Jeff had even launched what he then called "Earth's biggest bookstore.

Big or small, you could build whatever you wanted on the World Wide Web. And you didnt need to get permission from the government or corporate gatekeepers. You just started building.'

Because of the Internet -- and especially because of the World Wide Web -- things were starting to move very quickly in Silicon Valley in 1995.'

And Netscape was at the heart of the action. It was the fastest-moving, most innovative company in the fastest-moving, most innovative sector of the high-tech industry.'

At that point, in fact, Netscape was undergoing a process I now call blitzscaling which essentially means it was growing at warp speed and on a trajectory to become the dominant player in its realm.'

In January 1995, it had around 100 employees. A few months later, it had 200 employees.'

One of those employees was a friend of mine, and when I heard him talk about what was going on there, I would often think to myself, "Maybe I should try to get a job there too.

But as much as Netscape intrigued me, I still had that dream of creating a software product of my own that could improve the lives of millions of people. And what Id already learned from talking to venture capitalists was that nobody would invest in my ideas until I had more experience shipping products at existing companies. And so I thought I needed to get a job as a Product Manager at a well-established company. The bigger, the better.'

In retrospect, I really should have been trying to get a job at Netscape. Whatever its title was. Whatever it paid.'

Because Netscape was where, at the time, there was the greatest concentration of smart people designing the future I knew I wanted to be a part of.'

It was the central node of the consumer Internet industry.'

And that meant it was the best place for making high-value connections that could have had a major impact on my overall career arc and professional interests.'

In 1995, though, I wasn't truly network-literate yet."

I understood that professional relationships and alliances were important. I just didn't realize how important. And I didn't fully appreciate how the Internet and all the connectivity it was enabling would actually amplify this fact."

So ultimately I wasnt thinking strategically or intentionally enough. Instead, I was listening to my heart. I thought that a job as a Product Manager was the fastest route to get to where I really wanted to go.'

The thing is, my heart and my intuition were thinking primarily about me and my dreams. They weren't paying enough attention to the larger world around me, and how fast the Internet was changing things."

So thats why I say Dont just trust your intuition. Trust your allies too. Dont just listen to your heart. Listen to your smartest friends. Follow your network.'

Be passionate, sure, but also think about where your network is strong, and what opportunities that strength creates.'

And especially now, consider market realities and overall industry and cultural trends. Because its not just that were in some periodic but predictable economic contraction.'

This is a rarer situation, where unknowns abound, and major societal shifts may be underway. Are face masks a standard new part of business casual? Are in-person office meetings history? Are offices history?'

What new behaviors, trends, and opportunities are emerging out of the confusion and change that coronavirus has brought to the world? What are the second and third-order effects that the first wave of changes might produce?'

Obviously, thinking like this right now is an extremely difficult task youre already facing much more immediate questions. How do you stay healthy and safe in the current environment? How do you achieve some level of economic security?'

But as much as you can, incorporate an adaptive, forward-looking mindset too. By anticipating where tomorrows best opportunities may arise, you increase your optionality over time, and position yourself to pursue productive new career paths.'

For example, if you were paying close attention to the rise of YouTube in the mid-2000s, you would have understood it wasn't just going to create new jobs for software engineers but also a much larger number of new jobs in video production, advertising, entertainment, education, and more. If you were paying close attention to the rise of Facebook, Instagram, the same deal."

Social Media Manager. Podcaster. Instagram Influencer. None of those jobs existed when I started my own career 30 years ago. Most of them didnt even emerge until the last decade.'

So whats the YouTube or the Facebook of 2020? And what are the new kinds of jobs that they'll create? As new graduates, at the start of your professional careers, you should spend serious time investigating these questions. And how do you do that? By cultivating a strong professional network."

Relationships matter. Behind every new breakthrough technology, every new industry trend, there are people. That's where everything starts. And while knowledge creates awareness you might know that company X is growing fast because you read about it in the news -- relationships create opportunities."

As your parents have probably already told you, if you start making annual contributions to your retirement account at 25, you will end up with a lot more money at 65 than someone who waits until they're 35 to start saving for retirement."

That's the power of compounding interest, and it works for professional relationships and alliances too."

Research has shown that people graduating into a recession can suffer negative economic consequences that persist over a decade or longer. There are multiple reasons for this, but generally what happens is that people end up getting first jobs at smaller companies with lower salaries than they otherwise might have and thus are playing catch-up from the start.'

Unfortunately, this is the reality you're faced with right now. So how do you adapt to it?"

First, you have to figure out the problem you're trying to solve for."

And along with the fact that people who start their careers during recessions tend to start at lower salaries than people who enter the workforce during better economic times, I believe there is another component to this phenomenon. It's not just a salary issue. It's a social capital issue."

Think about it. If the world's biggest and most established companies are hiring less when you graduate, that means you will have fewer opportunities to get your first job at a place where you can build relationships with people who are already experienced and well-connected in your field. You will also have fewer opportunities to build relationships with lots of other new hires who are on the same trajectory as you."

What this means, then, is that you have to adapt to this new environment.'

You have to create new opportunities and pursue new strategies for developing the kinds of strong professional relationships and networks that naturally arise if your first job is at a company with hundreds or even thousands of employees.'

So how do you do this?'

Figure out ways to put yourself near the hubs of the networks that matter most in your given career domain. Because the sooner you begin developing your professional network, the earlier you will start benefiting from its compounding value over time.'

For me, in 1995, putting myself near the hub of the network that was most relevant to my own career goals would have meant doing everything I could to get a job at Netscape.'

But for you, in 2020, when jobs are hard to come by, what does that mean?'

Like I said earlier, relationships matter. Indeed, five years after I ended up not pursuing a job at Netscape, I made what I consider to be the best choice of my career. It was 1999. After leaving Fujitsu a couple years earlier, I had co-founded a company called SocialNet and was in charge of product there. The idea behind SocialNet was to create a place where people could establish online identities based on their real-world interests and connect with each other. As our name suggested, we were a social network well before places like Friendster, MySpace, and then Facebook took that concept mainstream.'

While we had fund-raised successfully, we were running into scaling issues and our Board and I were having major disagreements on strategy moving forward. So I had started thinking about leaving and what my next move would be. Initially, my thought was to start another company. To put everything I'd learned through my SocialNet experience into another shot on goal as a founder."

But then a friend of mine from college, Peter Thiel, asked me to join his company, PayPal, as a full-time employee. I had already been serving on PayPal's board for over a year, and now, since I was thinking about leaving SocialNet, Peter exclaimed, why not just join PayPal full-time?"

And Peter was right. PayPal had extraordinary momentum at that point because of the way eBay sellers and buyers had begun to use it as their payment method of choice. Incredible things were happening there. Hugely talented people were working there.'

It was, in effect, another shot at a Netscape-like situation -- a chance to work at a key hub of the rapidly evolving Internet universe. There was risk there too, and lots of unknowns, and other more predictable options I could have pursued instead. But this time I knew enough about the power of networks to know this was an opportunity I should take.'

At PayPal, I learned something new about how the consumer Internet works almost every day. I connected with valuable allies who continue to function as some of the most trusted members of my professional network.'

Working there was really the start of my identity as a well-connected Silicon Valley professional with an established track record of success. It's where I started developing the personal network I'd later draw upon as an investor."

If I hadn't joined PayPal, my career might have gone in a completely different direction. If I hadn't had a good understanding of the opportunity it represented versus the risks it entailed, through my conversations with Peter and others, I might have made a different choice. And that right there, is the value of network intelligence."

Now, I want to say a few things about luck, timing, and how quickly things change. Thirty years ago, when I graduated, the Internet existed, but not in any way where I or any of my friends had been thinking, Yes. Im going to spend my career building things for the Internet.'

And then in the space of a few short years, things changed completely, especially where I was fortunate enough to live, Silicon Valley. Where there had once been a recession, there was suddenly a dot-com boom. Every day, new companies were forming. New jobs were being created. People were coming from all over the world to the San Francisco Bay Area to stake out a claim on this incredibly powerful new platform for enabling human activity. The news media described it as a second gold rush.'

Then, in 2000, after five crazy years where founders could attract millions in venture capital based on little more than a good URL, the dot-com bubble burst. Hundreds of high-profile start-ups flamed out in a matter of weeks.'

In this regard, I was extremely fortunate. PayPal was one of the few companies that survived this era, and in 2001, eBay acquired us.'

But overall, the flame-out was so spectacular a lot of people were saying the Internet was over. It had all been a pipe dream. The future still belonged to newspapers, television, department stores, the mall.'

In reality, of course, the Internet as we know it was just beginning. Tremendous opportunities lay ahead.'

My point being: Things change, and they change fast. Over and over. In the end, much of our lives are determined by timing and how we respond to both good luck and bad luck. Right now, youre starting out with a lot of the latter. Eventually, something new like the Internet will come along.'

If you invest in strengthening your network, you'll have a better chance of spotting it when it does. You'll be better positioned to take advantage of the opportunities it creates."

So my advice to you today is to listen your allies at least as much as you listen to your inner voice. Believe in yourself, but believe in your network too. Because your network creates the map of the world that provides the context you need to make good forward progress in your life. And in times like these, where theres so much confusion and uncertainty, you will definitely need that map.'

Trust your heart? Listen to your inner voice? Follow your intuition?   As 2020's grads find themselves making a huge life transition at a time when entering the real world likely means sheltering in place, here's my virtual commencement speech for how to proceed in the face of this moment's unprecedented and extraordinary challenges. #graduation2020 #commencement #classof2020 "

This is really insightful, I find it very informative and helpful in way as a recent grad.'

I am 60 days away from launching my social networking application that has unique features. Would be honored to have you as part of the team sir'

Reid, hats down, this is truly amazing summary - You should go where the smartest people are busy shaping the future! They will help you understand, calibrate your judgement and be the foundation of your carreer. '

Follow us on LinkedInhttps://lnkd.in/e-XExrTor visit our sitewww.interviewart.net'

Incredibly well written and possibly the most important advice! Wish I had it when I graduated in 2009. As an immigrant with a dream to study and work in US' elite STEM fields, graduating with an MS in EE in 2009, the financial stress of having 0 jobs available was daunting. I got lucky and got a jobs in small company bit what really helped with my transition out to what I want to go next was building the professional network via pretty much looking at LinkedIn profiles of people in various interesting professions and literally "cold messaging" them for Information Interviews to learn more about their job. I didnt get a job via those but I met people who definitely helped me see my own strenths and make decisions about adapting my dreams. Thank Reid Hoffman ! Once again you have inspired me. This time maybe I will just write a small piece to help with my experience of graduation 10.5 years ago and hopefully it can help someone in their choices right now.'

Dont just trust your intuition. Trust your allies too. Dont just listen to your heart. Listen to your smartest friends. Follow your network. This is the quote that I need to hang on my bedroom wall for the daily reminder. I am from the Class of 2019 but I am grateful to have read your article today. I really resonate with what you are saying, " You have to create new opportunities and pursue new strategies for developing the kinds of strong professional relationships and networks..." I came from an underrepresented community and was the first one in my family to be a mechanical engineer. I have virtually almost zero support and connections.   Thanks to your invention of LinkedIn, now I am able to create genuine professional relationships from people all over the world. I am able to learn from and help other engineering professionals. I appreciate your work Reid! I am a big fan of your podcast Masters of Scale. I learned so much from it. Keep up the amazing work! '

ARTICLE: IS BLITZSCALING OVER? '

By Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh'

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to batter the world, many have declared an end to the Unicorn Era in general and blitzscaling in particular. Suddenly, capital is harder to come by, customers arent buying, and none of us can leave our homes. Meanwhile, the United States has already lost more lives to the disease than the entire Vietnam War and unemployment is at its highest level since the Great Depression.Matters of business can seem inconsequential compared to tragedy at this scale. Yet if we are to rebuild our economy after this crisis, we will need every available tool and technique, and that most certainly includes blitzscaling.'

Blitzscaling is the pursuit of growth by prioritizing speed over efficiency in the face of uncertainty. It is a risky strategy, but it is the right strategy for outracing the other players when competing for enduring leadership in a winner-take-most market. Blitzscaling can be misapplied, such as when WeWork spent billions to become the biggest player in a market without true winner-take-most dynamics, but so can any strategy. Even Warren Buffett makes mistakes.'

The fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic poses major challenges to businesses, especially startups. Spending is down, as is the stock market, and its harder to raise money.Even if you can raise money, you may find that your company is less valuable today than it was a year ago.These factors affect how you implement blitzscaling, but they dont change or invalidate the basic strategy.Thats because blitzscaling is relative.What matters is that you win the race, not whether or not you set a new world record.As we wrote in 2018, In a rapidly growing market, a company that grows 100% per year might be losing share; during turbulent times, a company that grows 50% per year might be gaining enough share to achieve market dominance.'

Of course, back in 2018, we did not foresee a global pandemic and associated depression.But the principle of increasing your lead over the competition, rather than focusing on an absolute growth target, can apply, even during these desperate times.In some industries like travel, the current economic headwinds are so strong that companies that do the best job of tacking into the wind can achieve or maintain market leadership, even if they are simply staying in place, or giving ground more slowly than others.'

Consider Airbnb, which faces some remarkably strong headwinds.According to the research firm STR, during the week of April 19-25, in comparison to the previous year, the hotel industry saw its benchmark rate of revenue per available room drop 78.4%, to just $19.How many strategic planners ever created a scenario which assumed an industry-wide 80% decline in revenues?Black swan is a light name for a global industry destroying asteroid.'

This is a huge challenge for Airbnb.On the business side, the company has responded by refunding guest deposits for cancelled stays, setting up a $250 million fund to help its hosts, and working with former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to develop cleanliness policies and training.But even with these actions, the company forecast that its 2020 revenues will be less than half those of 2019, and it announced on May 5 that it would be laying off nearly 1,900 of its employees (about 25% of its workforce).'

This is a painful blow, first and foremost to those former employees, but also to the organization.As Airbnb co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky wrote in a letter to the employees being laid off:'

Airbnb is doing what it can to honor the contributions of those employees, providing at least 14 weeks of severance, waiving the standard 1-year cliff on equity vesting so that every laid-off employee has the option of being a shareholder, allowing employees to keep their company-provided laptops, and covering 12 months of health insurance in the US, and through the end of 2020 outside the US.The last working day for laid off employees will be Monday, May 11, with the intent that the day will be set aside for those leaving and those remaining to be able to say their goodbyes.'

At the end of this process, Airbnb will be a smaller company, with less than half the projected revenues than it had just 60 days before.On an absolute scale, Airbnb is in a much worse position than it was on January 1, 2020.'

But on a relative scale, Airbnbs competitive positionis as strong as ever, and may well get stronger in the coming months.'

Blitzscaling made sense for Airbnb because as a two-sided marketplace that connects guests and hosts, its business experiences strong network effects.The result is a strong set of winner-take-most market dynamics. COVID-19 impacts the current size of the market, but it doesnt change those market dynamics.'

In fact, COVID-19 makes it even harder for any competitors to catch up with Airbnb. Is now an easy time to attract more travelers? More hosts? Who is better positioned to invest in cleanliness than the current market leader (who has a former Surgeon General on board to provide guidance)?Airbnb has established a unique network of hosts and travelers, a culture of belonging, and innovations in expanding and adapting the network to new experiences and utilities.These will be key in creating the new products and services for the future.'

Its going to be a hard year ahead for all travel companies.As Brian Chesky wrote in his letter to all Airbnb employees:'

Airbnb may very have to endure months of sparse revenues and other challenges.But so will every other player in the hospitality market.And we predict that when testing, treatments, and vaccines end the threat of this pandemic, Airbnb will be significantly stronger relative to the competition.'

The entire hospitality industry might be smaller at that point, but as it recovers, Airbnbs market leadership will allow it to benefit more than any other player.A few years from now, its share of the market will likely be greater than if COVID-19 had never existed.'

Nor will established blitzscalers be the only ones to emerge stronger AD (After Disease) than BC (Before COVID-19).The pandemic has radically altered consumer habits in ways that will have massive ripple effects for years to come.These changes, and the new technologies that emerge in response, will enable a new wave of business models innovations that will likely offer new opportunities for blitzscaling.'

As much as we all might wish it, we are unlikely to be able to turn back the clock and have things return to as they were in 2019.So rather than trying to go back, we should resolve to go forward, and use the need to rebuild as an opportunity to build better than before.'

COVID-19 has battered blitzscalers like Airbnb, forcing spending cuts & layoffs. But despite strong headwinds, the companies that tack into the wind most successfully will emerge with a stronger competitive position than before.'

This pandemic dramatically increased the need for my niche business. Looking to collaborate with visionaries who have experience with major sponsor partnerships and blitzscaling. .'

Love your articles'

Any company which comes through this pandemic will surely be a more resilient and a stronger company'

If, after this crisis, we are to rebuild our economy, we will need every tool and technique at our disposal and that certainly includes blitzscaling.'

Very nice article Reid Hoffman'

New opportunities will come out of this situation that Airbnb can exploit. For example, renting out flats as on-demand isolated office space...'

ARTICLE: A FUN MOMENT IN PODCASTS '

I was delighted to learn that WaitWhat, the startup company that makes my podcast Masters of Scale, is up for a few Webby Awards.Theres a popular choice vote that finishes tomorrow, Thursday.Initially, I resisted posting about it and encouraging people to vote; it felt too self-serving.But then I found out that Jessi Hempel is also up for a Webby as well -- and I realized that posting about the Webbys was actually an opportunity to spread the word about some of the podcasts I enjoy listening to, and also give thanks to the incredible WaitWhat team for making Masters of Scale so much fun to be a part of.'

Jessis podcast, a spin-off from her newsletter Jessiwrites, is called Hello Monday.Her podcast always reveals something personal, human, and important. I particularly liked Jessis discussion with LeVar Burton, about how to weather storms and challenges. (And also, I admit it, I loved Levar's work on Star Trek: The Next Generation, and the sense of hope and optimism the entire show brought to science fiction.)You can vote for Jessi at the Webbys here: Hurrah Jessi!"

Next, the Masters of Scale team did just a magical job producing a live version of our podcast down in Los Angeles with Robert Smith, the chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners who inspired the nation last year around this time with his commencement speech at Morehouse College, which he capped with a pledge to pay off the student loans of all 396 of Morehouse's new graduates. When he appeared on our show, he gave a great talk on philanthropy, software businesses, Trojan horses -- and we even had a choir on-hand to perform Robert Man!, a rousing remake of Elton John's timeless ode to space travel that the WaitWhat teamtransformed to tell the story of Robert's amazing career.You can vote for Robert at the Webbys here: Hurrah Robert!"

Finally, theres my classic Masters of Scale podcast.The entire WaitWhat team puts in heart, soul, blood, tears, and very late nights to make it magical.I just do the interviews and guide the content.I would never have the chance to learn from all the guests on the show that I engage with without June Cohen and her team.Vote for Masters of Scale here.'

Podcasts are these fun, intimate conversations.And Jessi is amazingly thoughtful.Robert was instructive and inspiring.And the whole team at Wait What is trying to reinvent the medium.So, Im encouraging your potential Webby vote -- not so much for me -- as for them.And, FWIW, Caterina Fake also does a great podcast with Waitwhat, Should this Exist? You can vote for her too: Hurrah Caterina!'

Indonesia'

My Husband was cured from Erectile Dysfunction and his Manhood was also enlarged by herbal means from Email: Robinsonbucler@ gmail. com.. Some other solution he can offer. {1}Diabetes {2}HPV {3}ALS {4}Herpes'

See, Tuesdays can squeeze out a bit of good news now and then. Congratulations.'

Indonesia'

Hola Reid desde Argentina un saludo grande !! Mi admiracion a ud !! Saludos !!'

Indonesia'

First heard about Zoom Video Communications from your Masters of Scale episode with Howard Schultz in 2018! #China '

Terbuka'

Indonesia'

Thank you for sharing Reid!'

Indonesia'

ARTICLE: IN PRAISE OF PROFESSIONAL VENTURE CAPITAL'

Its become fashionable among some entrepreneurs, and even some venture capitalists, to badmouth the venture capital industry. The industry certainly has many flaws. But to paraphrase Winston Churchill, venture capital is the worst method for financing scaling startups except for all the others.'

One of the conversations I had with Wences Casares (founder and CEO of Xapo), during this trip to Patagonia, reinforced my belief in the necessity of venture capital.'

The problem with many critiques of professional venture capital is the fact that the true alternative to VC is not some utopian world in which deserving entrepreneurs quickly and easily obtain the capital they need to grow. While venture capital may be a flawed industry, the alternatives are even worse.'

One option is to put the government in charge of capital allocation. The worlds history of five year plans and great leaps forward suggest that this strategy is seldom successful and often disastrous. Capital allocation decisions are based more on political concerns, such as ideological purity or connections, rather than merit. This isnt necessarily the fault of individual government officials; many civil servants are intelligent and dedicated. But unlike a pure financial investor, any governmental body making investment decisions is forced to take on additional, massive political risk. The failure of a government investment results in not just the loss of risk capital, but also what is likely a much larger loss of reputational and political capital (a classic example of this is the Department of Energys involvement in the solar panel startup Solyndra). This additional risk (which financial investors do not face) makes it almost impossible for any government to successfully provide venture capital.'

(Note that this is different from the government funding scientific research, or being an important early customer, where there is a much better track record of success.)'

The other option is to leave capital allocation decisions to wealthy individuals or families. Since Ive spent my career in Silicon Valley, its hard for me to envision this, but Wences points out that this is the reality in many parts of the world. As Wences put it, You're begging the 15 families who have the capital to see if they will give you capital. And if you haven't gone to private school with one of their kids, you won't get it. Risk capital should always be available to entrepreneurs who didn't have the privilege of growing up wealthy or attending an elite university. Venture capital, for all of its challenges, opens up the decisions for capital allocations beyond the wealthy families. Indeed, because venture capitalists are incented to invest and then distribute, they can only create wealth for themselves by creating wealth for others including the entrepreneurs."

At the end of the day, the results of the venture capital process speak for themselves (both positively and negatively). At the end of the third quarter of 2019, seven of the worlds 10 most valuable publicly traded companies were technology companies: Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Alphabet [Google], Facebook, Alibaba, and Tencent (the non-tech companies were Berkshire Hathaway, Visa, and JPMorgan Chase). All seven raised venture capital.'

Many people forget that Microsoft raised venture capital ($1 million from Technology Venture Investors). Bill Gates decided to raise the money, which Microsoft didnt need, and apparently never spent, because he wanted the venture capitalist Dave Marquardt on his team. Bill told an audience at Harvard:'

As is often the case, Bill thought deeper about the subject than most. He realized that a venture capitalist is not a banker or moneylender; she or he is a financial co-founder that the startup hires by accepting an investment. And like any co-founder decision, the decision to bring in a venture capitalist involves risk. Pick the wrong co-founder financial or otherwise and youll end up destroying value, and possibly your company. Even if you pick well, you have to be able to handle the inevitable conflicts and disagreements that will arise along the way. On the other hand, while it is possible to build a company without co-founders, its a much more difficult journey.'

Good venture capitalists are essentially networks in human form. They bring a unique network that provide the essentials of start-up growth follow-on capital, talent, industry knowledge and access in ways that a government agency or a wealthy family do not.'

The problem with bootstrapping is that youre going it alone. Its much harder to build a network around you if no one else shares your financial incentives.'

You can hear Wences talk about the value his investors brought him, the great work that Endeavor.org is doing around the world to build startup ecosystems, and how difficult it is to raise money in a market without venture capital in the first podcast episode from my Patagonia trip.'

'

Its become fashionable to badmouth the venture capital industry. The industry certainly has many flaws. But to paraphrase Winston Churchill, venture capital is the worst method for financing scaling startups except for all the others.'

ARTICLE: CHILE, ENTREPRENEURS, ENDEAVOR, AND GLOBAL LESSONS'

Silicon Valley can frequently be too provincial in its views of entrepreneurship, strategy, and markets. Part of why Im on this trip with Wences Casares (founder and CEO of Xapo) is to learn (and share) a broader view of entrepreneurship, where the strategies of Blitzscaling can be applied outside of Silicon Valley and China, and participate in Endeavors critical global mission for building the industries, companies, and jobs of the future.'

In my previous podcast with my friend and entrepreneur Wences Casares, we talked about the ability of entrepreneurs down here to see global markets that Silicon Valley entrepreneurs might miss. In our second conversation, we now turn to the topic of how blitzscaling works when youre not in Silicon Valley or China.'

Some of the discussions Ive had with Marcos Galperin, the founder and CEO of Mercado Libre, have helped me understand how the lessons of entrepreneurship differ in developing economies. When you see a weakness or challenge, try to convert it into a strength. In the case of Mercado Libre, if youre faced with serious gaps in the reliability of the existing logistics infrastructure, build your own, and make your reliability a competitive advantage. The same holds true for payments. And by doing so, you build a vertically integrated marketplace with a much deeper value stack.'

And while, of course, one of the rules for enduring technology companies is to achieve significant scale, one of the key strategies to achieve this goal for companies outside Silicon Valley is to address problems where a fragmented network is actually part of the value proposition.'

For example, Skype would never have launched in the US because domestic long-distance was cheap and available in the late 1990s, whereas international calling was so expensive and challenging that the cost savings made it worth the hassle to force your correspondents to buy a headset and install Skype, especially for price-sensitive users like international students. The small domestic market in Estonia and the fragmented nature of the market in Europe changed from a disadvantage to an advantage for launching Skype.'

Similarly, Spotify took advantage of its ability to launch in a smaller, constrained market like Scandinavia, which made the music labels more willing to experiment with different royalty systems. Spotify then used the data and insights from operating in Scandinavia to learn how to build the successful business globally.'

Among the interesting new techniques that Wences and Xapo are using to build a global business is his approach to creating and growing a completely distributed company.Xapo has 275 employees scattered across 62 different countries.While this poses some coordination challenges, it also allows him to recruit the best talent from anywhere in the world.On the podcast, he and I talk about some of the learnings and tools hes found that help him make remote work at Xapo more effective.Youll hear why he thinks working in an office is like living with your parents, while working remotely is like living on your own for the first time.Wences explains how he uses always-on Zoom videoconferencing to implement a virtual open door policy that generates serendipitous meetings between employees on different continents, and why hiring employees without ever seeing their face or hearing their voice is actually a competitive advantage.'

You can listen to our discussion on Greylock Partners Greymatter podcast, and I encourage you to subscribe for these and other insights on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and wherever you listen to podcasts.'

'

How do you create and grow a completely distributed company?   What international ideas may be missing from the Blitzscaling playbook? Today's episode of Greymatter features part 2 of my conversation with Wences Casares on global entrepreneurship."

ARTICLE: ARGENTINA ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ENDEAVOR, AND GLOBAL LESSONS'

Ive come down to Argentina with my friend and portfolio company CEO, Wences Casares, the founder of Xapo. Wences and I have served on the board of Endeavor together, which enables high impact entrepreneurship around the world. As part of connecting with local Argentinian entrepreneurs and part of the amazing Endeavor networks here and South America, Wences and I recorded a podcast to share what I and Silicon Valley can learn from the robust entrepreneurial ecosystem down here.'

Silicon Valley has the rare privilege and good fortune to be one of the most amazing entrepreneurial networks in the world. Despite a population of less than 4 million, Silicon Valley has created the majority of the worlds $100 billion companies, including mega-successes like Apple, Alphabet (Google), Facebook, Netflix, and Salesforce.'

We benefit immensely from the entrepreneurs, investors, and technologists who come from around the world to make Silicon Valley one of the central nodes in their network. Weve captured many of these lessons in my book Blitzscaling and my podcast Masters of Scale.'

But, just as every strength has a weakness, diverse entrepreneurial ecosystems like Argentina can teach Silicon Valley (and others) important lessons about global entrepreneurship. My quintessential teacher here is Wences.'

For example, while there are many advantages in being in Silicon Valley the ability to raise seed capital followed by blitzcapital to fuel hypergrowth, its status as a destination for people and companies from around the world, the amazing network of talent needed to translate capital into market leadership executives, technologists, and everything else you need to build a company. But its important to remember that these advantages cast shadows of disadvantages that offer opportunities to entrepreneurs in other areas of the world.'

Wences was Patient Zero for Bitcoin in Silicon Valley (you can watch his cameo in the Bitcoin rap battle), and his insight can be attributed to his experiences outside the region. Unlike people whose experience is limited to the bubble of Silicon Valley, hes seen the challenges presented by unstable governments and currency, such as the difficulties of making cross-border payments. This knowledge made Wences realize much earlier than most the importance of a global, nation-independent, reliable, robust monetary ecosystem.'

This is just one of the many insights that Wences and I covered during the conversations weve had down here. When you listen to this wide-ranging interview, youll learn more about how his childhood and family (his mother was an entrepreneur who involved him in her business, and his father built his own computer for the family) helped prepare him for life as a tech entrepreneur. Youll also hear the story behind how needing to pay a $200 bus repair bill led to Wences becoming a Bitcoin user and investor. And youll develop a better appreciation for why some of the bedrock, unthinking assumptions about the world that hold true in America simply dont in most other places around the globe.'

You can listen to our discussion on Greylock Partners Greymatter podcast, and I encourage you to subscribe for these and other insights on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and wherever you listen to podcasts.'

'

What important lessons on global entrepreneurship can Silicon Valley learn from entrepreneurial ecosystems like Argentina? In today's episode of Greymatter, I talk to Wences Casares of Xapo about global entrepreneurship, Bitcoin, Endeavor & more."

ARTICLE: TORY BURCH: COMBINING INCREDIBLE PATIENCE AND EXPLOSIVE SPEED'

Successful entrepreneurs have to find a way to combine both incredible patience and explosive speed. Sounds paradoxical? Perhaps, but that same, seemingly conflicting combination has powered the success of fashion designer Tory Burch.'

In this episode of Masters of Scale, youll hear how Torys remarkable story combines patience and speed. Youll hear how Tory went from a tomboy who hadnt worn a dress until prom, to cold-calling a New York fashion designer after graduation and getting hired sight unseen. Youll learn why she ignored the conventional wisdom about fashion and opened her own store from Day One, and how she was in such a hurry that she opened her metaphorical doors even though her literal, physical store doors didnt arrive in time for her Fashion Week launch event!'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. When have you displayed the patience to say no, so that you could later say YES! and launch an all-out effort?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like to #AskReid your own question, add it as a comment to this LinkedIn post.'

And if, after listening to this episode, you love Torys story, theres still time to apply to the Tory Burch Foundations Fellows Program for empowering women entrepreneurs. Get your application in by November 19, and you might be selected to receive five days of networking and workshops at the Tory Burch Offices in New York, a $5,000 grant, and an entire year of access to educational programs and other opportunities. Click here to apply!'

When have you displayed the patience to say no, so that you could later say YES! and launch an all-out effort? In our episode with fashion designer Tory Burch, we learn that successful entrepreneurs have to find a way to combine both incredible patience and explosive speed.'

ARTICLE: WEWORK: BLITZSCALING OR BLITZFLAILING?'

Prominent news organizations, ranging from The Economist to Wired (multiple times), have been describing WeWork as an example of blitzscaling. New York Magazine offers a vivid example, writing in a WeWork profile:'

We certainly appreciate their awareness of blitzscaling, the term we coined for the strategies and tactics for value-creating hypergrowth. We argued extensively in our book, Blitzscaling, that these strategies and tactics describe why Silicon Valley Bay Area which has a population of less than 4 million generates such a massively disproportionate number of global technology companies. If you add together Apple, Alphabet, eBay, Facebook*, Lyft, Palo Alto Networks*, PayPal, Salesforce, ServiceNow*, Twitter, Uber, and Workday*, these twelve companies alone have a market capitalization of $3 Trillion, a little bit more than the annual GDP of the United Kingdom in 2018. (Disclosure: * denotes a current or former Greylock portfolio company.)'

But to answer the question, Is WeWork an example of blitzscaling, and perhaps even more importantly, is blitzscaling appropriate for its business model? requires a deeper understanding of how we define blitzscaling, which is substantially more than just get big fast.'

This analysis will show that despite the companys remarkable revenue hypergrowth, the WeWork business model as implemented always lacked some of the key growth factors required for successful blitzscaling.'

The precise definition of blitzscaling, which you can find in our books first chapter, is:'

Blitzscaling does call for prioritizing speed over profits, but the more important question to consider is: when and why blitzscale?'

The purpose of blitzscaling is to achieve enduring market leadership in what we call Glengarry Glen Ross markets. A Glengarry Glen Ross market is a winner-take-most market that occurs when being the first player to reach critical scale brings lasting competitive advantage. The term comes from the classic movie about a sales contest where First prize is a Cadillac, second prize is a set of steak knives, and third prize is, Youre fired.'

Often, this is due to network effects, as in the case of communications tools like Facebook or two-sided marketplaces like Airbnb, but can also occur due to other forms of lock-in and outside of the technology industry, like 99-year mineral rights leases during the shale oil boom of the 2000s.'

Once achieved, leadership in a Glengarry Glen Ross market can provide decades of substantially profitable operations, repaying and justifying the costs incurred in blitzscaling. And many of the

Silicon Valley technology companies achieve their global prominence due to blitzscaling which provides jobs, tax revenues, and new products and services to society.'

So how do you know whether a company should blitzscale? In Blitzscaling, we lay out the four key growth factors that enable a company to successfully blitzscale, as well as the two key growth limiters that can make the strategy a poor choice. These growth factors are:'

Blitzscaling requires a big market to provide a big potential reward to compensate for the risks and costs involved. It doesnt make sense to expend massive resources to win a small market.'

You cant achieve market leadership unless users and customers adopt and buy your product. A good product with great distribution is more likely to win a Glengarry Glen Ross market than a great product with poor distribution.'

The purpose of blitzscaling is to win the market so that the company can generate massive profits for years or even decades. While a company might not have high gross margins or indeed even profitability on day one, it needs to have a reasonable hypothesis on how to achieve them in the future. (Consider Amazons evolution from a low-margin retailer to a high-margin marketplace and cloud computing leader.)'

This is the key growth factor that defines a Glengarry Glen Ross market. Without this growth factor, its hard to financially justify the high cost of blitzscaling.'

But growth factors alone arent enough. A would-be blitzscaler also needs to navigate two key growth limiters:'

The more a company can design a business model that leverages the growth factors while managing the growth limiters, the more likely it is that blitzscaling will be a successful and profitable growth strategy. That then allows entrepreneurs and investors to evaluate the investment equation: How much capital is worth risking to build an enduring business of how much value?'

WeWork has undoubtedly prioritized speed over efficiency. The company has raised nearly $13 billion, has already spent over $10 billion of that investment, and lost an estimated $900 million during the first six months of 2019.'

The question is, given its intended business model, should WeWork have pursued a blitzscaling strategy? Lets evaluate it based on the growth factors and growth limiters.'

Yes. The market for commercial real estate is huge, and the world is shifting towards more flexible office space, not less.'

Yes. WeWork has built a well-known brand, and because it is a real estate company, its own locations serve as its best marketing tool. Millions of potential customers walk by a WeWork location every single day.'

This is where the WeWork business model becomes problematic. The WeWork S-1 filing reports that in the first half of 2019, the company had revenues of $1.5 billion and expenses of $2.9 billion. Even if we restrict our cost of goods sold analysis to what WeWork calls location operating expenses plus depreciation and amortization, this generous interpretation still leaves WeWork with gross margins of just 3%. For reference, Apples gross margin is 38%, and Alphabets 56%.'

The hope might be that WeWork will be able to achieve much higher gross margins later. But what is the realistic path to this outcome? WeWork already reports an occupancy rate of 80%, which leaves little room for improvement. Will WeWorks customers tolerate significant price increases? Another option is to develop new products and services that will generate massive new industries, like Amazon did with AWS, but this is challenging when the core business consists of renting out space. Unlike software, where you can sell as many copies as the customers want, you cant rent the same square foot of space to more than one tenant.'

This is another growth factor where WeWorks business model is lacking. Its not clear that there are any significant network effects that apply to commercial real estate in general or co-working in particular. There is a small positive effect associated with the perception that WeWork spaces are a more creative community than traditional players like IWG (formerly Regus), but this is largely a matter of branding rather than a true network effect. WeWork also benefits from being the largest global player in its industry, making it more appealing to both digital nomads and large global clients. But in the end, WeWorks business model doesnt provide any lock-in. WeWork tenants can easily move, and many of its co-working members dont even need a cardboard box to clean out their dedicated desks.'

And while WeWork has locked in its locations with long-term leases, it can hardly achieve a monopoly on office space. Many competitors have arisen as a result. Heres a list of eleven major co-working competitors in the United States alone.'

In other words, its not clear that there is a Cadillac/steak knives/youre fired market dynamic at work. Indeed, IWGs own business seems to be doing just fine, whereas in a true Glengarry Glen Ross market, WeWorks growth ought to have challenged IWGs business.'

Then there is the question of how the two growth limiters apply to WeWork:'

Having visited multiple WeWork and IWG spaces, we can confidently say that WeWork does a good job of creating a more appealing work environment than its more established competitor, and every WeWork we have seen in person seems busy and energetic. The numbers bear this out: WeWorks occupancy rate of 80% compares favorably to IWGs 72%. This suggests that customers like the WeWork product.'

Of course, one factor that helps achieve this high rate is the fact that WeWork offers extremely favorable prices to its customers. For example, WeWork offers American Express Platinum customers an entire year of WeWork access for freea $2,700 value that comes bundled with a credit card with a $450 annual fee. Offers like this can boost occupancy but hurt gross margins. Subsidies only make sense in blitzscaling if they are a temporary measure that allows you to achieve market leadership and establish a profitable and sustainable business on the other side of those subsidies.'

Unlike a software business, real estate presents major operational scalability challenges with limited economies of scale. In the world of bits, serving each additional customer costs essentially zero, and scalability is functionally unlimited. In the world of atoms, specifically real estate, serving each additional customer costs real money, and scaling up requires signing leases, overseeing construction, hiring on-site staff, paying for housekeeping, performing maintenance, etc.'

WeWork should be able to overcome these challenges, which are principally a matter of execution rather than requiring innovative technology or techniques, but doing remains costly in terms of financial and human resources, and hampers the rapid growth of blitzscaling.'

WeWorks use of blitzscaling raises some important questions.'

The purpose of blitzscaling is to create a highly valuable business whose long-term value far exceeds the risk capital and operational risks required to pursue this approach. The advantage of technology companies (particularly software but sometimes hardware companies too) is that their low ratio of risk capital required to potential economic value allows a strategy that takes some extraordinary risks in an uncertain environment, and supports an iterative approach. For example, Alphabet invented AdWords several years after launching; Amazon invented AWS more than a decade after going public.'

While WeWorks business model checks the boxes on big market, effective distribution, and Product/Market fit, the poor gross margins (with no clear path to significant improvement), operational scalability challenges, and most importantly, lack of network effects and lock-in, indicate that this is not a Glengarry Glen Ross market where you can build enduring and profitable market leadership. Thus, the choice of blitzscaling is likely a dangerous rather than intelligent risk.'

In some cases, the growth factors and limiters are actually in conflict. Would WeWorks Product/Market fit be as good at double the price? Conversely, the ability for WeWork customers to easily join and leave the service improves Product/Market fit, but creates real possibility of churn.'

To successfully blitzscale its way to long-term profits, WeWork will need to change its model to increase margins and network effects. In fact, we have begun to observe this elsewhere in the real estate industry. Hotel companies like Marriott and Hilton have pursued an asset-light strategy where they manage the hotels that carry their brand, rather than owning the actual bricks and mortar. Airbnb is completely asset-less, acting as a two-sided marketplace to bring together hosts and guests.'

Finally, while Blitzscaling details strategies and tactics for taking intelligent risks to win a Glengarry Glen Ross market, there are risks that should not be taken. In our books chapter on responsible blitzscaling, we explain why blitzscalers should never take risks that endanger their customers or pose a significant risk to the fabric of society. Nor should they take ethical or integrity risks like the self-dealing behavior that reportedly took place under the watch of WeWorks founder and former CEO, Adam Neumann.'

WeWork has definitely created something of value. It pioneered co-working and demonstrated its mass-market appeal. That expertise and brand should be extremely valuable, both to WeWork and others. The problem is that the value WeWork created doesnt appear to exceed the amount of capital expended to build it.'

In our analysis, the company has built and scaled a great product, but would need to make significant changes to become a blitzscalable business. This is the fundamental challenge facing WeWorks new co-CEOs, Artie Minson and Sebastian Gunningham.'

Without major changes to its business model, WeWorks efforts at blitzscaling seem likely to turn into blitzflailing.'

Prominent news organizations have described WeWork as an example of blitzscaling. But despite the companys remarkable revenue hypergrowth, the WeWork business model as implemented always lacked some of the key growth factors required for successful blitzscaling.'

new word...'

I'm working on Alzheimers, Parkinson's and cancer diseases. I need an investor. If somebody interested to invest my project then we can have a talk and agreement. Please let me know in my Linkedin. Thanks for your support of me and science."

I think Adam Neumann's self dealing and other ethical problems should have alerted SoftBank and other private investors on his risk-prone decision making process and integrity shortfalls. In the book Zero to One, Peter Thiel states that capital allocation is what separates good CEOs from average and mediocre ones and that CEOs that emphasize frugality and effective capital deployment are the ones likely to succeed and outperform. Adam Neumann is a stellar visionary and one of the most charismatic people on earth but his capital allocation skills were pretty wanting looking back and maybe availability of cheap capital made inspired the non-complacency."

Hi Reid just a question without having read your book on blitzscaling, Is it always the case that "user acquisition, margins, growth rate, and so on" are what determines if a company lives or dies? There are plenty of companies around (small ones) that have repeat, loyal customers and so for them it is about user retention over user acquisition is it not? For long term sustainable businesses don't they need to be thinking about their user turnover as well as acquisition? Or is acquisition the sum of new customers + retained + repeat? Of course the other thought i have is that not all companies are subscription businesses and not all companies want to scale up to kazillion users overnight. Maybe some companies will be mum and dad businesses for the lifetime of the founders...'

Required reading for tech founders. If you're succeeding, this is a great analysis of the fundamentals and a reminder to stay on track. If you're not succeeding...this is a great analysis of the fundamentals and a starting point on actionable insights."

ARTICLE: BITCOIN RAP BATTLE: HAMILTON VS. SATOSHI'

Today, there is a vigorous debate raging between cryptocurrency and centralized currencies. Bitcoin celebrated its tenth anniversary this year, and cryptocurrency values overall were climbing again after a period of decline. Media interest increased again too, and with it, arguments about cryptocurrencys volatility and ultimate value to society. Was it still just a speculative fad without real utility? Or a foundational technological breakthrough on the order of the Internet itself?'

As an investor and technologist, I am interested in cryptocurrency on three levels: as an asset (i.e. a digital alternative to gold); as a currency (to create a new transactional layer on the internet); and as a platform (to build alternative kinds of financial applications). As such, Greylock is an investor in both Coinbase and Xapo.'

And as both an entrepreneur and an engaged citizen, I believe that respectful but spirited debate is an important attribute of any healthy society. Pitting diverse ideas and viewpoints against each other is how you test, evaluate, and refine them and thats how learning happens and progress is made.'

Given this, the cryptocurrency debate seemed like the perfect subject for a battle rap! We decided to pit the original bankster himself, Alexander Hamilton, arguing for the merits of centralized currencies against cryptocurrency's mysterious Satoshi Nakamoto."

I enlisted EpicLLOYD from Epic Rap Battles to play Hamilton, Timothy DeLaGhetto to play Satoshi, and legendary lyricist Gift of Gab to host the battle. The video includes cameos from dozens of cryptocurrency pioneers and Internet entrepreneurs alike. Indeed, one of the most rewarding aspects of this project was getting people like Adam Back, Wences Casares, Dylan Field, Charlie Lee, and Zooko all in one place and having great conversations on where cryptocurrency is heading.'

Why produce a battle rap music video that debates the strengths and weaknesses of centralized and decentralized currencies? Chalk it up to the influence of Lin-Manuel Miranda!'

Like thousands of others whove seen Hamilton, I was delighted and amazed by Mirandas musical vision and talent. And I was particularly struck by his two Cabinet Battle songs, and the way he used battle rap to express the opposing viewpoints that informed the issues and debates underlying fundamental moments in Americas development.'

Since then, Ive been intrigued by the idea of using battle rap to explore some of the most polarizing issues that characterize our own era.'

These days, however, debate often consists of little more than ad hominem attacks, synchronized shouting, and reflexive efforts to abort any competing perspective with charges of, as our factually allergic President puts it, FAKE NEWS! Theres lots of noise but very little listening.'

But while battle rap is obviously competitive in nature, what I realized watching Hamilton is that its also a form of discourse where extremely attentive listening routinely occurs. Because battle raps are won and lost based on who presents ideas and arguments in the most clever, funny, and linguistically creative ways, participants and listeners alike pay close attention to whats being said.'

As we note in the video, its still not clear if Satoshi is a pseudonym, a group of men, a man from Japan, a damn hologram, or a grouponym okay, I just freestyled that last one right now so who knows if he, she, or they showed up? But watch closely and maybe youll spot something I missed.'

More importantly, I hope the video gets more people talking about crypto and its evolving role in global commerce. As I wrote in Wired UK four years ago, Im a strong believer that at least one global cryptocurrency will eventually achieve mass-market adoption. In 2014, I personally invested in Blockstream and led Greylocks investment in Xapo. In 2017, my Greylock partner Josh McFarland led our investment in Coinbase.'

But as far as cryptocurrency has come in ten short years, were still in the early days of this technology. And since I believe that informed, civil, and open-minded debate ultimately leads to more innovation and adaptation, I hope the debates continue.'

So check out our new video and share your perspective on our YouTube page when you do. We value your feedback. In fact, were rewarding one bitcoin, split between two winners. But dont expect us to show up at your door with an over-sized paper check. Our prize is going to be distributed quickly, seamlessly, and digitally!'

'

Why produce a battle rap music video debating the strengths and weaknesses of centralized and decentralized currencies? I explain:'

ARTICLE: MASTERING GROWTH'

How Im working with Harvard Business School Online to teach the counterintuitive truths of scaling up'

As a founder, you rarely have enough time to step back and strategize. Entrepreneurs feel the pressure to execute, often prioritizing daily firefighting over long-term planning. You put your blinders on and stay laser-focused on whats directly ahead.'

But one thing Ive learned in two years of working on Masters of Scale is that investors and entrepreneurs, at all levels, have a lot to teach one another. Every growth story is full of hard-won, often counterintuitive advice. Theres no one perfect way to scale a business, but theres a lot to be learned from the challenges that other legendary leaders have faced while building wildly successful companies. '

This is why Masters of Scale is partnering with Harvard Business School Online to launch a new, one-time-only, online course called Mastering Growth. '

Starting October 9 and running weekly until November 16, 2019, Mastering Growth will equip learners with new, often counterintuitive insights to achieve organizational success at scale. In the first 5 sessions of the course, a renowned Harvard Business School professor will lead students through a case study and illuminate themes and tension points within it using curated audio from Masters of Scale and wisdom from notable special guests. Ill then lead the 6th, final session of the course, and dive deeper into theories Ive introduced in the podcast and my book, Blitzscaling. '

The Harvard Business School cases, combined with Masters of Scale episodes, represent a greatest hits of the leading companies of our time from headline-grabbing superstars like Airbnb, Alibaba, Uber and Netflix to proven and durable compounders of scale and growth like the legendary Barry Diller. Through this first-ever collaborative course, youll learn lessons from esteemed entrepreneurs, investors and leaders that you can apply to your own company.'

Mastering Growth will take place via Harvard Business School Onlines real-time, interactive virtual classroom, giving busy founders and leaders a space to discuss key strategic issues from wherever they are in the world. '

You can engage in the course in two exclusive ways: as a Wall Participant and an Observer. Heres a look at both: '

Wall Participants engage from a curved video wall that enables them to see their peers situated around the classroom, participate in live, multi-person conversations, and speak directly with faculty and me. This immersive experience is limited to 60 seats and mimics what you would experience in a Harvard Business School classroom. '

Observers get a front-row seat to the Wall discussion via livestream, and can share insights with each other through an expert-moderated chat. This experience is limited to 300 learners. '

It wont be recorded, so this is a one-time-only class to experience live. And once the course is filled, its filled. So Id encourage you to apply now.'

The life of a leader is busy. Its hard to find a moment where you can step back and think, and connect with other leaders who are tackling similar challenges. This is your chance both to learn from legendary Harvard Business School minds and connect with fellow founders and executives. If you want to build the next great company or take your current company to the next level of scale join us.'

To learn more about Mastering Growth visit mastersofscale.com/Harvard. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Apply today!'

'

Masters of Scale is partnering with Harvard Business School Online to launch a new, one-time-only, online course called Mastering Growth. Learn more here.'

ARTICLE: MANY MANY MOMENTS OF LIFT'

More than 122 million lives saved. Hundreds of millions people lifted out of extreme poverty. Over the course of its existence, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has helped drive massive positive outcomes like that by focusing on what it calls actionable measurement aka a commitment to collecting and analyzing data about its activities and interventions, and then using this information to adapt and refine its efforts.'

As Bill Gates noted in the Foundations 2013 Annual Letter, the digital revolution has played a key role in increasing the organizations ability to measure which approaches are working and which arent. Thanks to cell phones, satellites, and cheap sensors, he wrote, we can gather and organize data with increasing speed and accuracy.'

But its not just that the Foundation has been effective at aggregating and analyzing the whos, whats, wheres, whens, and hows of huge global challenges like childhood mortality. What struck me when reading Melinda Gates new book The Moment of Lift, is how committed and adept the Foundation has also been in understanding the "whys" a question that even the most finely tuned sensors can't always offer much insight into.'

Still, anyone who wants to improve the world at scale knows how important it is to ask why. Until you deeply grasp why people do the things they do, you won't know where the most promising opportunities to introduce new ways of doing things exist."

Or, as Melinda puts it in The Moment of Lift, If you dont understand the meaning and beliefs behind a community's practices, you won't present your idea in the context of their values and concerns, and people won't hear you."

This key principle is one that many would-be change-makers be they product managers or philanthropists overlook.'

Melinda has been extremely successful in both these roles.In the late 1980s, she began her career at Microsoft as a product manager and helped turn Word, Encarta, and Expedia into consumer mainstays. In 2000, she co-founded The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has since grown into the world's largest private charitable organization."

The path from product manager and the sense of impersonal authority that title conveys to philanthropist which can be defined as lover of humanity, may seem unlikely. But it makes perfect sense to me. After all, great product managers are typically great user understanders. Theyre always looking for more context. Theyre always looking for more ways to project themselves into the lives of the people they hope to serve.'

When Melinda and Bill started their foundation, their goal was highly ambitious, entrepreneurial in spirit, and also fairly open-ended. As Melinda describes it in The Moment of Lift, they set out to discover the huge missed ideas that would allow a small investment to spark massive improvement.'

That led them to go where there was the most harm, and consequently, The Gates Foundations first global initiative involved reducing rates of under-5 mortality in parts of the world where millions of children were dying from diarrhea and other preventable conditions and diseases each year.'

But while the Foundation initially believed that increasing distribution of basic vaccines would be the best way to make an impact in this realm, a conversation Melinda had with a young mother in Malawi led to a new realization.'

What about my shot? the woman asked her, referring to the long-acting birth control injection Depo-Provera. Why do I have to walk twenty kilometers in this heat to get my shot?'

As a result of this conversation and others, Melinda began to understand how improving access to contraceptives could lead to substantial reductions in under-5 mortality rates. When women in developing countries space their births by at least three years, each baby is almost twice as likely to survive their first year and 35 percent more likely to see their fifth birthday, she writes.'

In the years that followed Melinda's encounter with that young mother, she continued making trips to Africa and other developing regions in the world, and listening and learning from the people The Gates Foundation intended to serve. And eventually these conversations led to the huge missed idea that would help guide the Foundation's efforts: Namely, that if you want to lift up humanity, empower women."

As Melinda recounts in The Moment of Lift, this fundamental but overlooked truth was at the root of so many of the issues the Foundation had been working on. Reduce childhood deaths? Increase access to contraceptives in countries where death rates are high. Improve agricultural productivity? Make sure researchers working on new seeds and fertilizers talk to female farmers as well as male ones, because the former do much of the agricultural work in developing countries.'

Whenever you include a group that's been excluded, you benefit everyone, Melinda writes. And when youre working globally to include women and girls, who are half of every population, youre working to benefit all members of every community. Gender equity lifts everyone."

So while empowering women in pursuit of a more equitable society, with equal rights and equal participation, is obviously the right moral path to pursue, its also an economically productive one. Indeed, as Melinda notes, No country in the last fifty years has emerged from poverty without expanding access to contraceptives.'

Even when your strategy has a clear path to scale, achieving lasting structural doesn't happen by simple decree. Instead, it tends to be an iterative process that hinges on the development and implementation of what Melinda describes as delivery systems, or getting tools to people who need them in ways that encourage people to use them"

In other words, as much as the Gates Foundation emphasizes scientific research and new breakthrough products, its not just enough to develop effective solutions. In addition, even a robust distribution network doesnt necessarily guarantee success, if that network doesn't actually reach the people you want to reach or engage them in a way that make them receptive to what you're offering."

To get people to adopt new practices, protocols, and tools that are unfamiliar to them, and perhaps even contrary to their existing beliefs and values, you have to be transparent about your intentions. And you have to present your solution in a way that reflects their concerns and desires.'

That requires empathy. Indeed, at one point in her book, Melinda talks about the empathy barriers that sometimes characterize change-making efforts, where outsiders come to a community with good intentions but show little interest in why the people there do things the way they do, and sometimes dont even bother to explain why they think something should change.'

Sound familiar? While Melinda was writing about development efforts in Senegal, she could just as easily have been talking about Silicon Valley.'

Here, entrepreneurs and technologists often believe so strongly that the projects theyre working on will create such positive outcomes for the world that they think everyone else should just step aside and let them do their magic.'

When disruption is regularly posited as the fastest path to progress, empathy may seem more like a bug than a feature. But as Melinda shows with great clarity and grace in The Moment of Lift, a commitment to empathy has been a defining feature of The Gates Foundation for the last 20 years, and one of the main reasons it has been able to drive such massive improvements in global health and well-being during this time.'

Over the next 20 years, the opportunities to pursue change at scale will be vast, as we strive to keep improving global health, mitigate climate change, create new sources of renewable energy, produce enough food for a growing global population, and figure out how to productively implement powerful new technologies like driverless cars, AI, robotics, and synthetic biology. Philanthropists and product managers alike should look to Melindas experience for inspiration and guidance.'

Great learning from Melinda Gates in her book "The Moment of Lift": "If you dont understand the meaning and beliefs behind a community's practices, you won't present your idea in the context of their values and concerns, and people won't hear you."   #socialimpact #changemaking #momentoflift #GatesFoundation #entrepreneurship'

ARTICLE: BLITZSCALING | COMPETITIVE STRATEGY'

This episode in ourGreymatter Blitzscaling capsule series, with Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh, focuses on the topic of competitive strategy. In an ideal world, you wont have any competition. But the world is far from ideal. How should a blitzscaling company think about and respond to the competition?'

Below is an edited transcript of Reid and Chriss discussion.'

Youll hear about how Reid, Peter Thiel, and Elon Musk used speed to lead PayPal to victory in a contest with eBays own payments system (you can also hear Reid and Peter discuss competition and many other topics on theMasters of Scalepodcast, hosted by Reid).'

Youll learn why the most important factor in a blitzscaling business model isnt a traditional business school metric like gross margin, but rather the speed at which the model allows the business to grow and adapt. And youll get specific advice on how to find, test, and hone your competitive edge.'

Finally, youll hear why the ideal competition isnt the small or weak. Small and weak competitors are often the result of a small and unappealing market. Rather, the ideal competition is strong but inflexible.'

Greymattershares perspectives and stories from some of the worlds top technology entrepreneurs and business leaders. Subscribe hereand never miss a new episode.'

How should a blitzscaling company think about and respond to the competition? We answer this question in the latest episode of our Greymatter Blitzscaling capsule series. - why speed is the most important factor in a blitzscaling business model - why you should ask customers directed questions - why your ideal competition shouldn't be small or weak"

ARTICLE: SEGOVIA'S NEXT STEP"

The best way to combat global poverty at scale is to put money directly into the hands of millions of people who have very little of it.'

Thats the simple, powerful vision thatSegoviaCEOMichael Faye and his co-founderPaul Niehauspitched me in 2015, and the reason I was excited to lead their Series A round with a personal impact investmentfrom myfoundation.'

From their experiences building the innovative nonprofit GiveDirectly together, Michael and Paul learned how transformative money can be for people long on creativity and short on capital. (And as a venture capitalist, I know the same!) But their experiences also taught Michael and Paul how difficult it can be to move money into and around emerging markets. Together with an exceptional team, they set out to make it much easier.'

Over the last four years, Segovia has made great progress in making this vision a reality. In addition, it has done so while simultaneously building both an enterprise business and a consumer payments business. Such an undertaking is not for the faint of heart, but the paths to scale in both instances were compelling so Segovia pursued this opportunity. Now, the core infrastructure the company built is being used in a wide range of use cases, including everything from international agribusinesses working to digitize their supply chains to individual migrants sending money back to their relatives at home.'

Thats why Im excited about the deal Segovia announced this week to accelerate both its enterprise and consumer efforts.'

As part of the deal, the enterprise part of Segovias business will be acquired by Crown Agents Bank, a trusted leader in emerging market payments that has both a rich history and a rapid growth trajectory. CAB and its CEO Albert Maasland are extremely well-aligned with Segovias vision. They bring scale, strong relationships throughout Africa, and strengths in areas such as FX and B2B payments services that will perfectly complement Segovias world-class tech. Michael will join CABs board to work with Albert to fully leverage the synergies between the two organizations.'

Meanwhile, Segovia's consumer remittance team,Taptap Send, will be spun out as a separate company. This will enable it to focus on managing its own rapid growth. Taptap aims to slash the cost to individual users when sending money home. So far, so good: Taptap is establishing strong new benchmarks for remittance company growth while focusing on corridors that others have neglected. Moving forward, the team will need to navigate the challenges of explosive growth, including understanding whether and when to blitzscale."

Im proud to have journeyed alongside Michael, Paul and board member Chris Schroeder, who has brought his unique experience and perspective as both a technology executive and emerging market investor and mentor. I am excited to see the next phase of growth for both organizations.'

The best way to combat global poverty at scale is to put money directly into the hands of millions of people who have very little of it. Thats why Im excited about the deal Segovia announced this week to accelerate both its enterprise and consumer efforts.'

ARTICLE: THOSE WHO TEACH, CAN DO'

In Silicon Valley, intelligence is both abundant and coveted. Because of this fact, Silicon Valley job interview questions have gotten tougher and weirder as interviewers devise queries designed to identify the best of the brightest. Consider, these brainteasers that various companies have asked job candidates in recent years:'

If you can quickly come up with plausible good answers to these especially the last one then I predict you will have a set of very successful interviews!'

Compared to the questions above, the interview question I pose most often to entrepreneurs and job candidates is fairly straightforward but also more reliably revealing:'

In asking this question, Im hoping to find out a number of things about a person. What do they see as the most relevant variables in a given job objective? How do they characterize risk and opportunity? How do they measure improvement?'

In other words, Im not just looking for insights into what they learned. Im interested in understanding how they learn. How do they conceptualize their takeaways from the experience? How do they communicate them to others? Are they what I call an explicit learner?'

Along with sheer intelligence, grit and creativity are other key characteristics employers and recruiters seek out in Silicon Valley. These are highly valuable traits to have. But what Ive found in my experience is that truly breakout performers also tend to place an unusually high emphasis on improving their capabilities and performance over time. Theyre infinitely curious individuals who always want to read one more book on a subject, conduct one more experiment or test, and ask one more question. Coupled with this facet of their personality, they also have an extremely well-developed ability to share the knowledge they acquire with others. Theyre explicit learners.'

Our capacity to learn is a foundational characteristic of humanity. Other species possess this capacity to some extent as well but theres no such thing as dolphin kindergarten. Humans are such devoted learners we organize the first 18 years of our lives around immersive obligatory learning in many countries. And many people make systematic learning aka formal education their primary pursuit for even longer than that.'

But formal education is just one kind of human learning, and not always the most important one. When I think of learning, I think of it as the acquisition of skills or knowledge with a deliberate orientation toward improvement. It starts with experience or study, but also demands reflection, subsequent action, and assessment. The goal is not just to know more things, or enjoy a variety of different pastimes. The goal is to systematically prepare yourself for future opportunities; to increase your ability to successfully adapt to both anticipated and unforeseen challenges; to better understand when to make decisions and what variables you should consider before making them.'

Obviously, people learn in many different ways. You can learn formally or informally. In groups or alone. Intentionally or intuitively. In work settings, Im most apt to look for people who incorporate learning into their lives in a'

deliberate, persistent, and explicit way simply because I believe that individuals whove developed habits that make learning central to how they interact with the world are more likely to learn more than those who dont embrace learning so intentionally.'

Airbnbs co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky is a good example of this kind of explicit learner. I remember the first time we did a radio appearance together, he immediately turned to me after we had finished and said, What could I have done better?'

Any time I ask Brian similar question about some aspect of his career or past performance, he always has a well-considered answer to share because thinking about the world in this way is a habit to him.'

Like all explicit learners, Brian understands that while consciously asking questions and gathering data is one aspect of explicit learning, another key part of it involves reflecting on whatever information and feedback youve collected, and then synthesizing it into some illuminating way.'

And this is ultimately what Im looking for when I ask people what theyd tell their former selves to do differently if they had a chance to re-do some past project. Can they present their learning as a compelling story or anecdote, or a memorable aphorism?'

The process of doing so is useful for two reasons. First, it turns a private observation or revelation into a shareable asset, which has obvious value in a business setting. The more explicit learners you have on your team, the more you all learn from each other; the value of each individual insight compounds across the organization. Second, the attempt to express what may be a vague or somewhat intuitive notion or revelation into a more explicit aphorism or principle encourages you to think more analytically and discerningly about what youve learned. What are the most crucial aspects of the insight? Are there ways to broaden it?'

For example, many years ago I invested in a company started by someone I knew in a social context. Lets call him Bob. While the investment was significant enough that I would have done a reference if the entrepreneur had been someone I was unfamiliar with, I didnt with Bob because I assumed I knew him given our interactions in a social context.'

But it turns out I knew Bob less well than I thought I did. In reality, he had substance abuse issues and often went completely AWOL for days at a time. This is not a quality you want in a CEO, and especially not in the CEO of a newly launched start-up that needs a steady and vigilant hand steering the ship.'

As you might expect, my instinctive takeaway in the wake of this experience was an obvious one: Dont do any more business with Bob!'

But thats not actually a very useful learning because its only narrowly applicable. And in thinking about it some more, and trying to formulate a better learning, I arrived at a more broadly useful conclusion. Namely: Knowing a person in one context doesnt mean you know them in every context. So if a project or investment would typically require a reference check, and you dont actually know the person in the relevant context, do a reference check!'

In this way, I learned more than just how to deal with Bob in the future. I learned how to avoid going into business with other potential Bobs.'

Inevitably, the reflection and assessment that occurs as you think about how best to express or concretize an insight increases your understanding of it: Its the old saw about not truly understanding something yourself until you can successfully explain it to someone else.'

This, I believe, is why Mark Zuckerberg doesnt just choose a new learning goal each year, but also publicly shares his efforts to do so and reports on how it turned out. Its why Bill Gates doesnt just voraciously read books, but also regularly publishes reviews of them. Through this process, the student becomes the master.'

Or to put it in another way, in a contrarian twist on George Bernard Shaws well-known aphorism, Those who teach, can do.'

Which, you may have noticed, is the title of this essay. Or at least it is now.'

When I started writing this essay, I called it My Favorite Interview Question. But when, in the process of wrapping things up, I decided to challenge Shaws famous quote, I also realized Id learned a punchier way to title it.'

And because this is essay-writing, I actually could go back in time, in a manner of speaking, and tell my first-draft self what to do differently!'

'

ARTICLE: WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO RIGHT?'

In the late 1800s, in what's known as the Second Industrial Revolution, multiple major new technologies initiated an era marked by even more rapid transformation than the century that preceded it especially in the United States. Electrification, railroads, telegraphs, and eventually the automobile all helped unleash unprecedented productivity gains, and thus unprecedented prosperity."

But these and other new technologies of that era didn't just raise standards of living. They also radically transformed how people lived."

Electrification meant people could suddenly do far more at night than they'd ever done before. There was a massive shift from rural living to cities. Railroads and telegraphs enabled new networks of communication and distribution. Skyscrapers concentrated human capital and allowed corporations to take on increasingly sophisticated endeavors."

Overall, life got faster and more connected, and much, much richer with possibilities. These new technologies, in other words, didn't just change how people, goods, or information got from one place to another. They changed how people dreamed about the future. They created new social relations and life patterns. They expanded conceptions about what one might aspire to, what defined a "good life," and how one should achieve meaning or purpose. They re-defined what it means to be human.'

Today, we're in the early stages of a similarly massive transformation. Multiple new technologies that get broadly categorized under the label artificial intelligence, or AI, are the animating force in this transition. Over the next several decades, AI will have the kind of economic and cultural impact that electrification, railroads, and the other technologies driving the Second Industrial Revolution had on the world. We'll achieve massive increases in productivity and prosperity. We'll also see massive shifts in how people live and organize their lives."

In the face of such change and uncertainty, it's easy to slip into a dystopian mindset. To see more challenges than opportunities. To lean toward fear rather than hope. With AI, uncharted territories definitely lie ahead.And the effects of this transformation are likely to take place over a much shorter time period than previous technological revolutions. But the best way to confront this fact, I believe, and the risks it implies, is not simply to ignore or resist AI's evolution. Instead, we should rigorously steer toward the best possible outcomes in a thoughtful and deliberate way."

And that's why I'm delighted to be a part of the launch today of Stanford University's new Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence."

The purpose of Stanford HAI is to convene researchers, builders, leaders, and users from across a broad range of disciplines including philosophy, neuroscience, government, computer science, robotics, and many others to promote and develop human-centered AI technologies and applications that enhance human productivity and quality of life.'

One reason some people tend to view AI through a dystopian lens, I think, is because of how corporations are at the forefront of this realm. Granted, there are a handful of nations, including China, France, Canada, and the U.S., which have undertaken government-funded initiatives to accelerate AI development. But corporations have been at the leading edge of such efforts.'

And that leads to concerns that AI's development trajectory will favor approaches, applications, products, and services that prioritize the profitable over whatever works best for humanity."

As someone who views entrepreneurship as a powerful lever to create positive impact at scale, I have a different view. While I believe strong government oversight is a key component to productive, prosperous, and well-managed societies, I also believe that corporations, including those operating on a global scale, can create massive social progress along with the profits that sustain their efforts.'

And history bears this out: The gains we've made since the First Industrial Revolution began in England in the mid-1700s are so astounding it's easy to lose sight of them. To illustrate this, for example, we live more than twice as long as most people did then and yet we can make a 500-mile trip in roughly 1/100th of the time it would have taken in 1750."

Compared to the humans of just a few hundred years ago, in other words, humans today can draw upon an expanding array of technological superpowers to make life more productive and more meaningful. And while governments played a key role in making this era of rapid transformation and human progress possible, by providing social stability and key physical infrastructure, breakthrough innovations like the steam engine, or standardized parts, or the factory assembly line didn't arise out of official government programs or initiatives. They were the work of inventors, entrepreneurs, and corporations in search of profits."

Of course, as much as humanity has achieved over the last few centuries, we've hardly created a utopia here on earth. Whatever prosperity our new productivity has created, we still have the same kinds of inequity, conflict, and injustice that plagued us in eras of lesser abundance."

Our new technologies have also created new challenges like pollution, resource depletion, and climate change. And to achieve the net positive outcomes we now benefit from, government often had to step in to temper capitalism's shortcomings and excesses via child labor laws and other forms of workplace regulation, consumer protection laws, and more."

So as much as I believe that today's corporations are already leading us toward a new era of rapid productivity gains and the subsequent increase in quality of life that will arise out of that I also believe that successfully navigating the shift that is now underway must involve many different stakeholders with the widest possible range of perspectives."

Stanford HAI will be a place for such conversations. While the institute will draw upon Stanford's deep history with Silicon Valley and its most innovative technologists and companies, it will also incorporate the multi-disciplinary viewpoints of policy-makers, legal experts, ethicists, philosophers, economists, and scientists, and ensure that participation is diverse and inclusive in terms of race, gender, and culture. In doing so, it will seek to understand best practices for developing AI technologies that serves humanity in ways that broadly benefit us all. "

As chair of Stanford HAI's advisory board, I look forward to the robust discourse it initiates in pursuit of this mission."

And as it officially begins its work today, I want to share one question I will continue to ask myself as AI evolves: What could possibly go right?'

This question, of course, stands in counterpoint to the one that has driven much AI discourse in recent years: What could possibly go wrong?'

With a technology as powerful and unprecedented as AI is, "What could possibly go wrong?" is obviously a crucial question to ask and thus I know Stanford HAI will keep asking it. And I hope many others do too, especially those who are directly developing this technology.'

Whether it's the prospects of mass unemployment or algorithmic bias baked into hiring processes, lending decisions, and more, we need to have the rigorous and even skeptical inquiry from diverse viewpoints that will help us see potential problems, and then either steer away from them before they happen or correct them when they do."

At the same time, I also believe that we mustn't simply view our efforts to navigate to the best possible future through defensive or preventative lenses."

And that's why I ask "What could possibly go right?

What, in our most wildly optimistic vision, does the world look like when AI is as woven into contemporary life just as seamlessly as electricity is?'

How might we use it to create new jobs that are both economically rewarding and personally fulfilling?'

Can it drive down the costs of crucial goods and services so much that governments will be able to provide much better safety nets than they ever have before?'

How can we best tap AI to create education tools and services that make it possible for every person on the planet to maximize their potential?'

Can new AI-driven healthcare devices lead to massive decreases in illness?'

Can myriad new forms of emotionally attuned robot companions abolish or at least greatly diminish human loneliness?'

My point is not that AI is the magic answer to all humanity's problems but that it will only be as magic as we dream it can be. Today, some of that dreaming starts at Stanford HAI. I can't wait to see where we go from here."

"What could possibly go wrong?" has driven much AI discourse in recent years. However, we must not view our efforts to navigate to the best possible future only through a defensive lens. As AI evolves, I will continue to ask myself "What could possibly go right?

ARTICLE: HOW TO BUILD A STRONG, SCALABLE CULTURE FOR BLITZSCALING'

At this point, almost everyone in the startup world agrees that hiring and culture are important. Whenever these topics arise, its almost guaranteed that the discussion will touch on how every Google employee had to interview with Larry and Sergey before receiving an offer, how Zappos offers new employees $1,000 to quit to weed out those who arent true believers, and how uber-guru Peter Drucker said, Culture eats strategy for breakfast. These are inspiring stories and sound bites, but what they fail to do is explain why hiring and culture are so important, and how to manage them as your startup rapidly scales.'

As with other key activities, a blitzscaling company has to evolve its approach to hiring and culture; what worked just fine for a company with 5 employees is not likely to be optimal for a company of 500. As you grow, everything from how you find job candidates to what kinds of employees you hire will have to change. In this environment of constant changeboth in personnel and organizational structureyou need to develop a coherent culture the organization and its members can rely on to help guide their actions. Hiring and culture go hand in hand because the primary driver of an organizations culture is the additive effect of the people it hires. And at the same time, the allure of a strong culture is one of the primary tools to help the organization recruit and motivate its people.'

Culture is not destiny. It does, however, shape the environment you will be working in for years or decades to come, so choose wisely. Here are some things you need to think about if you want to build a culture that can scale in lockstep with the company:'

A coherent culture needs to be specific, rather than simply an accumulation of agreeable platitudes. For example, Steve Jobs famously said, A players like to work only with other A players, which means you cant indulge B players. Its a great quote, but saying that your company has a high-performance culture of A players doesnt provide enough useful differentiation. What is an A player? Someone who went to the right schools? Worked at the right companies? Can code 10x faster than the average developer? Your culture should attract the talent you want and repel the talent you dont want. It is better to be loved by a few than liked by a multitude. If your culture doesnt rule out A players who arent a good fit, its not specific enough.'

For example, the two companies I helped start, PayPal and LinkedIn, both had coherent cultures, but were radically different from each other. PayPal was very individualistic, with a lot of emphasis on hiring for high IQ and very little emphasis on hiring for work experience. The company tempo had a frantic pace that tended to be driven by what Id characterize as structured panic. In contrast, LinkedIns culture was far more collaborative and patient. We felt that we were seeing something that others didnt (specifically, the value of a professional social network), and understood that it would take a long time for the world to come around. This meant that we needed to be patient and take multiple shots on goal, while remaining confident that we would eventually succeed. People that fit the PayPal culture tended not to fit the LinkedIn culture, and vice versa.'

Its critical to make sure that this focus on fit doesnt lead you to create a homogenous, non-inclusive culture. A culture might emphasize high IQ or patience; thats not the same thing as restricting your hiring to people who have the same background as the founders. Hire people who add to the companys culture, and who make it easier to hire a diverse workforce at scale.'

Its important to note that bad cultures can sometimes produce good companies. When it comes to culture, employees ask themselves, All other things being equal, do I want to keep working here? The thing is, in most cases, all other things arent equal. Many talented people will tolerate a bad culture (i.e., work in an environment in which theyd rather not work) to be part of a winning team. Within Silicon Valley, companies like Oracle, Zynga, Uber, and yes, PayPal have been criticized for their culture, as have companies outside the Valley like Microsoft and Amazon. Those same companies have also defined new industries and created over a trillion dollars in shareholder value.'

The ideal, of course, is to build a winning team that people love being on. But the reality is that the pace of blitzscaling sometimes requires trading off employee experience for speed. The key is making these decisions consciously and explicitly, rather than without considering the consequences of the tradeoff. For example, when LinkedIn China was trying to launch an important project, the project leader moved project team into a single hotel so that the team members could work for two weeks at a time without the distractions of everyday life. No one wants to work under such circumstances on a long-basis, but if youre up front about the tradeoff, they may be willing to do so to achieve a key goal or milestone.'

Frequently, founders are told to focus on building a world-class team. As a result, they seek out experts and specialists. The problem is, specialists tend to be far better suited to mature businesses than startups. Generalists play an important role, even in large companies, but early-stage startups in particular should focus almost entirely on hiring generalists. This doesnt mean hiring people who lack specific skills or advanced education. Generalist isnt a description of a persons skills; its a description of their capabilities.'

Hiring generalists means hiring people who can change directions, refactor priorities, learn something new, and adapt quickly to whatever curveballs the universe throws at them. Part of being a generalist means being aware that trying something new inherently implies making mistakes, and having the resilience to recover rapidly and even more important, learn from those mistakes. A generalist is someone who can do everything from finding a new office to assisting with financing to running partnership negotiations, all the while managing payroll and taking out the trash. A jack (or jill) of all trades is actually a master of adaptability. When you have 10 or fewer people in the organization, everyone has to be a generalist.'

Another frequent piece of bad advice for early stage startups occurs when well-meaning people tell you to hire employees who can scale with the company. Thats simply wrong. Hiring individual contributors who are great at what they do, but arent going to scale into senior roles when the company grows is absolutely fine *if* theyre great at what they do now, what we referred to in our book The Alliance as a tour of duty.'

Even if you wanted to, youre not going to be able to hire people for permanent roles. The team you have now wont all be with you when you have 10,000+ employees. The senior management team you have now wont be the same thats around you when you ring the NYSE bell at your IPO. At LinkedIn, only two of the original 10 employees remain at the company, though the others are enthusiastic and supportive alumni (including me!).'

You dont want to prematurely hire people who are best-suited to the later stages. As the company grows, youll be coaching some current employees to take on bigger roles, bringing in new people, and regularly reconfiguring the organization.'

Building a strong and productive culture takes work and commitment on the part of the founders, but it is a key success factor for blitzscaling. Blitzscaling means throwing out many of the conventional rules of business; this aggressive approach can leave many wondering what they should and should not do. When your company is doubling or tripling in size every year, a strong culture acts as the centripetal force that maintains strategic and tactical coherence between the many people and initiatives that are driving growth.'

'

This essay is adapted from the planned Blitzscaling Playbook. To learn more about why, when, and how to blitzscale your organization, visit Blitzscaling.com to order your copy of our book Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies.'

Your culture should attract the talent you want and repel the talent you dont want. But its critical to make sure that this focus on fit doesnt lead you to create a homogenous, non-inclusive culture. Hire people who add to your companys culture.'

Thanks you, thousands like.'

Culture needs to be pushed higher up the agenda. Searchie was picked this year as 1 of the 10 startups shaping the fourth industrial revolution. We are allowing companies to match individuals on their culture through an AI interview and assess them by their natural personalities. Predicting the behaviour of a potential employee in the work environment can be of value and save much of the headache of hiring the wrong person. Hiring is still one of the biggest challenges for many organisations and we hope to help change that. It compliments LinkedIn very well.'

WOW... Do you have any self awareness? You DIRECTLY contradict the premise of this post in two paragraphs. How is any organization supposed the Attract the Talent they want and "repel" the talent they don't "want" and NOT create a "homogeneous" "non-inclusive" culture. Reid Hoffman you are a fool. You without question advocate an irrefutably "non-inclusive culture" in the first paragraph and then caution against doing so in the second. SMH'

Thanks for providing valuable inputs...'

#culture is the most important factor for any organization and it has many aspects to it. Heres how https://www.google.com/amp/s/arsalankhan.com/2016/02/19/5-questions-to-ask-about-your-culture/amp/'

Awesome article on culture as the centripetal force while scaling startups. FYI Digbijoy Shukla Sandeep Kashyap Shailesh Albuquerque'

ARTICLE: THE POWER OF DIFFERENCE: SALLIE KRAWCHEK AT ELLEVEST'

I strongly believe in the power and importance of diversity. That's one of the reasons why Masters of Scale was the first American media program to commit to a 50/50 gender balance for its guests. But a nuance that is often missed is what it's like being the person who provides that diversity."

Sallie Krawchek, my guest on the latest episode of Masters of Scale, earned her fame with her willingness to be different, and to stand up for her principles rather than going along with Wall Street norms. This was often difficult and harrowing. Sallie is candid about the kind of sexual harassment she faced on Wall Street, and if you'd prefer not to hear the details, I do provide an advance warning in case you'd rather skip 30 seconds ahead."

Sallie survived and overcame these challenges, as well as what she considers the toughest environment she ever faced7th grade at an all-girl's school in South Carolinaand today, she's leveraging the power of diversity with her startup Ellevest, which helps women invest and own their own futures."

Sallie and I discuss how a diversity of viewpoints helps you see the opportunities that others miss. She talks about why it's a good thing that she and her co-founder Charlie disagree about almost everything. She'll also explain why it's okay to be fired on the front page of the Wall Street Journal, as long as you got sent home for the right reason (in Sallie's case, for advocating that her company return money clients lost following bad advice), and the simple technique she uses to maintain a diverse workplace at Ellevest, with a gender-balanced engineering team and 40% people of color."

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What kinds of diversity have you built into your team? Not just gender, and ethnicity, but in terms of radically different experiences. How have you maintained that diversity over time?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me @ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

50% of guests on @MastersofScale are women. But for #WomensHistoryMonth, it seemed perfect to talk with @SallieKrawcheck, CEO of @Ellevest, an investment platform trying to close the gender money gap.'

ARTICLE: HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR COMPETITIVE EDGE AS A BLITZSCALING COMPANY'

My old friend Peter Thiel once wrote an essay for the Wall Street Journal, titled Competition Is for Losers. Entrepreneurs frequently make the mistake of picking highly competitive markets. I suspect that they fall into this trap because many entrepreneurs come from elite universities where they succeeded by outcompeting a bunch of other smart people on a level playing field.'

This may be commendable in the academic world, but this is a brittle strategy for blitzscaling. Its far better to pick a market where you face no competition (either people dont understand the market, or youre a contrarian who defies the conventional wisdom and happens to be right) or, more likely, weak competition.'

You may be incredibly smart and insightful, but among the billions of people in the world, there are probably hundreds of thousands with comparable skills and capabilities. Dont compete with them head on; find a valuable opportunity space theyve overlooked. Often, this comes from a willingness to take risks that others fear, but which you realize are overblown.'

When Richard Branson started Virgin Atlantic, he was entering a known and valuable market with weak competition i.e., other airlines. Bransons team didnt focus on outdoing the airlines on their own turf (landing slots and frequent flights). Instead, they focused on making the flying experience delightful and unique a playing field where the competition was demonstrably weak.'

When you dominate your competition, your company may be described as having a monopoly. The term has developed highly negative connotations, conjuring up images of a bullying robber baron using any means possible legal or illegal to squash potential competitors. Restraint of trade is rightly illegal. But this distaste for monopolies shouldnt lead us to conclude that dominant competitors need to be penalized.'

You dont have to make it easy for challengers to copy your playbook, but you have every right to fiercely compete and win. Moreover, innovation and the emergence of new markets renders even the strongest monopoly moot. Microsoft had one of the strongest monopolies in history on desktop software, but it couldnt block the rise of iOS and Android on mobile phones.'

Heres how to maintain your competitive advantage as you blitzscale.'

As an early-stage startup, your fundamental competitive advantage is speed. Thats why its important to prioritize speed over efficiency and scale as quickly as possible. Other advantages include being able to take on a lot of risk (because you dont have anything to lose) and being willing to go where other people arent (because you can survive in very marginal niches).'

Once you reach what we call the Tribe Stage (10-99 employees), others have probably noticed your pioneering efforts. Once this happens, new entrants may jump in, sensing a hot space. Regardless of what you think of the quality of these competitors, they muddy the waters and make it harder for you to break out.'

Assuming that the competition has emerged, you can start to develop strategies to beat them. You're not letting your actions be dictated by the competition; by acting, youre trying to dictate their actions. Part of first-scaler advantage comes from setting the pace and making other people play by your playbook. One way to do this is to scale up faster than they do: raise more, hire more, scale more."

You should also pick and stick to a specific competitive edge. To blitzscale successfully, you need a differentiated hypothesis about the market. It may change along the way, as new data emerges, but you should always have a hypothesis. This means researching the unknowns and finding what scales as quickly as possible. Here, your network can be a key part of your offensive strategy.'

At the next stage, which I call the Village stage (100-999 employees), youve made your bet, and now you're wondering if you should double down. As you make these decisions, you need to make sure youre not drinking your own Kool-Aid. One of the ways I like to generate fresh, objective insight is to ask people, "If we were trying to compete with ourselves, what we would do?" You can also seek outside perspectives, either from an independent board member, or by leveraging the network intelligence of smart people you know.'

Until now, your sole focus has been offense. If you dont have customers, why do you need to worry about retaining them? Now you should ask, How can we fend off the competition? Often, the answer is more blitzscaling. Being the first scaler helps you acquire customers, lock in investors, and attract the best talent. Both Yahoo and Excite were search engines from Stanford, but Yahoos first-scaler advantage gave it a head start that Excite could never overcome. (Yahoo was eventually overtaken by Google, which changed the game, both with its PageRank technology and its innovative AdWords business model.)'

Once you grow beyond the Village stage, establishing a new competitive edge tends to be very difficult. (If you're interested in learning more about blitzscaling within an established company, you may want to read our other essay Blitzscaling Beyond Startups.) Instead, you need to focus on strengthening your existing position. There are several best practices for doing so."

First, you can try to establish a standard. One of the standard Silicon Valley plays is to move from an app to a platform so that you can attract people to build on and to your platform. Salesforce.coms Force.com ecosystem is a great example of this. Second, you can offer a more complete solution, and try to outflank the competition.'

Eventually, acquisitions become important, if not essential. You can acquire an innovative technology and team, then feed them with massive resources as they scale. Acquisitions are the biggest offensive and defensive plays in your playbook.'

Think about how certain key acquisitions won a major market for their acquirers. Acquiring YouTube allowed Google to recover from its failed Google Video initiative, but it also kept YouTube out of the hands of other potential acquirers. Acquiring Instagram and Whatsapp helped defend Facebook against mobile incursions, but also made Facebook the leader in mobile. Once youve become the market leader, you need to play both defense and offense simultaneously.'

Blitzscaling is just the beginning of your company's story, not its conclusion. Once you start to blitzscale, it's just as important to keep your competitive edge sharp if you want to build and maintain an enduring market leader."

'

This essay is adapted from the planned Blitzscaling Playbook. To learn more about why, when, and how to blitzscale your organization, visit Blitzscaling.com to order your copy of our book Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies.'

'

ARTICLE: BLITZSCALING BEYOND STARTUPS'

While the hypergrowth of blitzscaling is often synonymous with the latest high-tech startup from Silicon Valley, blitzscaling isn't limited by geography, industry, or even company size. Blitzscaling is a technique that can also help an established company make the most of a great opportunity. Yet while blitzscaling can be practiced by anyone, it isn't appropriate for everyone."

Blitzscaling isn't a free option. It's costly in a variety of ways, from lower operational efficiency to higher capital expenditure and employee (and founder) burnout. Here's how your company can decide if blitzscaling will work for you."

Blitzscaling consists of sacrificing efficiency in order to pursue extremely rapid growth in the face of uncertainty. This implies several key points:'

First, blitzscaling fits best with new products and markets that have blockbuster potential. These represent the situations where it is possible (though not easy) to grow from 1 to 1 billion. You can't do that in mature markets, or in new markets that are limited to a small niche. The uncertainty of these new markets drives one of the under-appreciated benefits of blitzscaling: staging your commitment gives you the option to abandon the project if it fails to progress."

A classic big company mistake is to attack a new market at scale right from the beginning. This seems to make sense because a big company appears to have major advantages in resources, brand awareness, and so on. However, trying to scale before achieving product-market fit is a high-risk maneuver which could potentially result in massive losses and little success. Groupon opted for an all-out blitzscaling approach to growth because it thought it had achieved product-market fit with consumers; the problem was that it hadn't achieved the same fit with the local merchants who were providing the deals. When merchants fled the platform, Groupon's growth proved to be unprofitable and unsustainable. Today, Groupon is worth about 1/10th what it was on the day of its IPO, and revenues have been flat for years."

Even successful blitzscalers such as Google have suffered this fate with much-ballyhooed projects like Google Wave and Google+, both of which represented enormous investments that were ultimately unsuccessful. Google felt that they had to launch Google+ to respond to the threat of Facebook, while Google Wave was an attempt to attack Microsoft's email franchise.

Both were launched with great fanfare, but failed to win over users. In contrast, Google's push with Android had similar motivations (i.e., responding to the threat of the iPhone), but started as a much smaller effort that was ultimately successful. Blitzscaling requires walking a delicate line between committing too soon (and pursuing the wrong product/market strategy) and committing too late (and falling behind the competition)."

Second, the high cost and uncertainty of blitzscaling means that it only makes sense if you have the chance to win a big prize either an enormous short-term payoff, or a lasting, long-term advantage. '

It may be worthwhile to blitzscale if you identify a short but enormously valuable window of opportunity. This tends to happen more in the world of finance think of the farsighted investors from The Big Short who bet against the subprime mortgage market. In 2006, John Paulson raised a $147 million fund to bet against subprime mortgages. The fund generated $17 billion in returns in 2007.'

The more common big prize is a lasting, long-term advantage. These advantages, once seized, can generate years or even decades of profits. These advantages can include:'

In these cases, blitzscaling is essentially a form of long-term investment. You sacrifice efficiency and incur heavy short-term costs in hopes of recouping those expenses (and then some) once you have established your long-term advantage. If you hear people talking about pursuing a land grab strategy, but can't explain the source of lasting advantage, close your wallet and consider whether they should be a part of your organization."

Finally, you need to be one of the few or only people who have a key insight into the opportunity that others lack or disagree with. My old friend Peter Thiel famously likes to ask job candidates the question, What important truth do very few people agree with you on? This question applies to businesses as well as people. If a large number of players can clearly see the potential of a new market opportunity, know what actions to take to realize that potential, and have the resources to carry out those actions, it is highly likely that a fierce competition will ensue, and highly unlikely that any of the competitors will realize an outstanding return. Even when you're an existing company, there are a lot of startups that are going after the same opportunity, so your chances of success are low. If you're one of 30 companies, your chances of success, all other things being equal, are 3%. And if one of the competitors is already blitzscaling successfully, the only chance to catch them is if they stumble."

Another common misconception, however is that having a truly unique insight eliminates the need for blitzscaling. Your unique advantage is almost certainly temporary. Your own success will draw in competitors, shortening the duration of your window of opportunity. Even the value of enduring market leadership can erode over time. Almost 20 years ago, Microsoft's dominance of the desktop operating system was considered so powerful a monopoly that the Department of Justice sued on antitrust grounds, and the company was ordered to be broken up (this ruling was overturned on appeal). Today, Microsoft still retains over 90% market share of desktop operating systems, but that franchise is less important, thanks to the shift to mobile devices and cloud computing. Microsoft's return to its status as the world's most valuable company has come about because it blitzscaled its new cloud business, not because of the desktop market."

You won't always have a choice whether or not to blitzscale. When a competitor attacks one of your markets and starts to successfully blitzscale, you have to respond in kind or risk conceding the market. This dynamic holds true regardless of whether the blitzscaling competitor is another large company, or more likely, a new startup. Earlier in its history, Airbnb was busy blitzscaling its business in the United States when it suddenly faced a serious challenge in Europe. Rocket Internet, the startup factory run by Germany's Samwer brothers, raised $90 million and hired 400 people to rapidly scale up an Airbnb of Europe. At the time, Airbnb had just raised $7 million, and had only 40 employees. This was an existential threat, because a global accommodations business simply doesn't work if it can't offer options in Europe. Airbnb responded by launching its own blitzscaling effort the company raised more money, opened 10 European offices in less than three months, hired hundreds of European employees, and won the battle."

'

Assuming that you've decided that blitzscaling makes sense for your company, established companies that try to blitzscale have both advantages and disadvantages over startups. It's critical to be realistic startups have inherent advantages when it comes to blitzscaling. Blitzscaling is all about speed and risk-taking, and startups are far more nimble, and have far less to lose. Established companies that want to blitzscale need to find major advantages to overcome their inherent disadvantages in speed and risk-taking."

This sounds obvious and self-evident, but is actually somewhat unintuitive. The scale that comes with being a large, established player isn't always an advantage for blitzscaling. If a startup can play the same game, scale doesn't provide any inherent advantage unless it is a massive, 10X advantage. For example, when Airbnb was blitzscaling, it was competing with Homeaway, an established player that had much greater scale. However, Homeaway had achieved its scale via a string of 21 acquisitions (before being acquired by Expedia itself), which meant that all of its acquisitions were running on different technology platforms and serving different clienteles. Indeed, Homeaway's scale was actually a disadvantage."

On the other hand, there are some opportunities that you can only tackle if you already have scale. For example, Amazon couldn't have launched Amazon Web Services without achieving massive scale in its datacenter operations. Trying to build that product from scratch, without being able to leverage Amazon's economies of scale and reputation for operational excellence, would have been nearly impossible. Even today, AWS's main competitors come from other scale companies like Microsoft, Google, and IBM."

Another advantage that established companies have is the ability to make multiple blitzscaling attempts. Blitzscaling is a risky strategy, and you might not achieve success on the first try. You need to have enough capital to stay in the game. Microsoft was famed for its ability to iterate its way from cheap knockoff products to market dominance. The first and second versions of Microsoft Windows were unsuccessful attempts to copy Apple's Macintosh operating system; the third version, while inferior to its inspiration, was good enough; and the follow-up versions such as Windows 95 and Windows NT were good enough to allow Microsoft to unleash a marketing blitz that carried them to dominance. Microsoft later repeated this strategy with its Xbox business, which evolved from the Xbox, to the Xbox 360, to today's Xbox One."

To borrow an analogy from sports, you may need to take repeated shots on goal before scoring. Established players have a much easier time financing multiple shots on goal.'

Nor is this advantage limited to technology. In the shale oil industry, financial wherewithal played a major role in the success of pioneers like Chesapeake Energy. The late Aubrey McClendon said, To be able to borrow money for 10 years and ride out boom-and-bust cycles was almost as important an insight as horizontal drilling. If something didnt work for a little bit of time, we could regroup and find something that did work.'

While the ability to undertake multiple attempts at blitzscaling is an advantage, so is the ability to be patient with a single attempt. Large companies can have longer time horizons than startups, who need to show immediate results to continue raising money. Google often plays this long game with technologies ranging from self-driving cars to a cure for aging. Facebook is also playing the long game with Oculus Rift and virtual reality. The key is knowing when to scale up. Microsoft tried to scale smartphones too early with Windows CE. As it turns out, the modern smartphone only arrived when Moore's Law made mobile CPUs powerful enough, and Apple combined software with capacitative touchscreens, Corning's Gorilla glass, and high-volume Chinese manufacturing to create the iPhone."

One final advantage that established players have is the ability to use acquisitions to drive blitzscaling. Acquiring a business that is already blitzscaling (or has the potential to blitzscale) can transform an existing company. Priceline, for example, best known for "name your price" airfares, executed this strategy to perfection when it acquired Booking.com, allowing it to achieve a lasting advantage in the hotel booking market. In 2015, Priceline actually had the highest 10-year return of any stock in the Fortune 500. As with direct blitzscaling, this requires having a rare or unique insight into the market. Had all the players in the travel space known the value of online hotel booking, Priceline wouldn't have been able to afford the Booking.com acquisition. Established players can also use a string of acquisitions to blitzscale. Google used the acquisitions of Android and YouTube to blitzscale to market dominance in two key product categories: smartphones and online video.'

A major issue that established players face are that the incentives tend to favor cautious expansion, rather than aggressive blitzscaling. Successful companies generally assume that they already have something valuable, which means risk-taking tends to be penalized. If you make the play and fail, you've destroyed a valuable thing. (That's not something a startup faces a startup is already dead by default.) Companies also face pressures from shareholders, analysts, the press, etc. The thing is, they're not wrong! Similarly, the potential rewards have to be huge to matter. A $10 million opportunity, which a startup might see as a company-making bet, is seen as rounding error by a big company. This is why the common answer is to leave this to startups."

The incentives that drive individual employees can also have a negative impact on blitzscaling attempts inside an established company. The employee or executive who proposes a risky blitzscaling initiative is the one who stands to gain the most (promotions, bonuses, clout, etc.) from its success. In contrast, other employees stand to lose a great deal from that success, especially if the organization has a forced ranking program. And if the initiative is unsuccessful and costs the company a large sum of money, they all bear the cost of failure as well. Is it any wonder that so many bold initiatives are buried by colleagues pointing out all the risks?'

Another (largely self-inflicted) disadvantage for large companies is the inability or unwillingness to stage their investments. This results from internal incentives, which tend to reward managers based on the revenues that they oversee, and thus penalize failure and undervalue growth opportunities. Even a small commitment is just another commitment the overhead cost is nearly the same and once a lot of people are involved, you have finite options. Doing a staged commitment means you have to re-litigate the decision at each stage, which makes the overhead costs prohibitive.'

Senior managers may also, for ego reasons, prefer splashy announcements and major commitments to small experiments that can be blitzscaled if successful. Larger companies also impose a great deal more managerial overhead, which means that it's harder to justify experiments because the price tag is simply too high. Even Google's famous 20% isn't free its cost is effectively 20% of Google's payroll."

Finally, established companies that are publicly traded face an additional set of pressures to deliver short-term financial results. Blitzscaling generally requires sacrificing short-term efficiency and thus financial results to achieve long-term value creation. Privately-held companies are usually closely-held; this makes it easier to get the major shareholders to agree on a risky, long-term investment. A widely-held public company may face activist shareholders and other such shareholder rebellions if it attempts to carry out a blitzscaling strategy. This could even lead to the worst of possibilities incurring the initial expense of blitzscaling without the necessary commitment and follow-through to reap the long-term rewards.'

'

With these advantages and disadvantages in mind, there are specific management techniques that large companies can use when they set out to blitzscale.'

One productive hack to help your existing company blitzscale is to find ways to leverage people and businesses with prior blitzscaling experience. One obvious play is to partner with a blitzscaling startup. For example, GM responded to Uber's blitzscaling (and the corresponding threat it represents to the market for cars for human drivers) by investing $500 million in Uber's blitzscaling rival, Lyft. A less obvious technique is to leverage venture capitalists. Venture capitalists are keen fans of blitzscaling (and the returns it brings), and if you ask them to invest their money in your project, even if your company is contributing the majority of the funding, they will provide a realistic assessment of your situation. For example, many large companies misprice their own assets. They may overvalue their own advantages, and attempt to blitzscale even if an objective observer would consider the attempt ill-advised. Approaching venture capitalists is a quick way to get a sense of how a market of knowledgeable professionals assess the value of your assets."

Once your blitzscaling project is underway, you will also need to manage it differently than regular projects. Blitzscaling's increased pace and decreased efficiency can seem reckless and wasteful when evaluated against conventional initiatives designed to provide steady growth. As a result, a blitzscaling project needs to be insulated from the rest of the company so that the executive in charge can run it effectively. The classic example is Steve Jobs' approach to managing the original Macintosh team, which had separate offices that were off-limits to regular Apple employees. More recently, Larry Page applied this same technique to Android's team, who worked in separate offices (Google employee badges didn't grant access to Android offices) and adopted different hiring practices. Much the same is true for the PlayStation project at Sony, the Kindle project at Amazon, and the Watson team at IBM."

Blitzscaling is rarely a natural act. It often feels uncomfortable to move so quickly and invest so much, especially if you're an established company and have a standard approach to new projects and initiatives. But when the opportunity is big enough, and the competition fierce enough, it can be the only path to winning. Big players who understand their inherent advantages and disadvantages can successfully use blitzscaling to distance themselves from their competitors and to fend off threatening startup upstarts."

'

To learn more about why, when, and how to blitzscale your organization, visit Blitzscaling.com to order your copy of our book Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies.'

Want to blitzscale your established company? Find major advantages to overcome your inherent disadvantages in speed and risk-taking.'

ARTICLE: AURORA: THE NEXT LEG OF THE ROAD TRIP BEGINS!'

In the early decades of the 20th century, automobility at scale ushered in new patterns of living and a new era of broad-based prosperity in America.For some time now, Ive believed autonomous vehicles can do the same. So when the opportunity arose last year for Greylock to co-lead the $90 million Series A round in Aurora with Index Ventures, Ijumped at the chance.'

While the autonomous vehicle industry is still in its infancy, Auroras three founders had already established themselves as giants in the field, with each playing key roles at three leading pioneers in the version 1.0 era of autonomous vehicle technology.Chris Urmson, Auroras CEO, led the self-driving car team at Alphabet for seven years. Drew Bagnell, Auroras CTO, led perception and overall autonomy architecture for Ubers self-driving vehicle effort. And Sterling Anderson, Auroras CPO, led the team at Tesla that delivered Autopilot.'

Together, they joined forces to pursue a straightforward but massively important mission: Deliver the benefits of fully autonomous vehicle technology safely, quickly, and broadly. Their goal is to develop Aurora Driver, a full-stack self-driving software system that it will make available to a wide range of OEMs.'

The progress Aurora has made in the year since its Series A announcement has been astounding. So much so that the companyjust announceda major Series B round last week, with $530 million in new investment.Sequoia Capital is leading the round, and Greylock, Index, T. Rowe Price, Amazon, and others are participating as well.'

Every epic road trip needs a full tank of gas at the start, and with this latest round of funding, Aurora has that. As Forbes.compointed out, while Aurora wont be building physical vehicles like many of its competitors in this space, its still among the best-funded players working to commercialize autonomous vehicle technology.'

That means it has more resources to devote to where it can really add transformative value designing and testing the software systems that can lead to Level 4 autonomy and higher, and building out all facets of its company as its technology matures. With this new round of funding, Aurora will be able to continue hiring the world-class talent that has put it at the forefront in the Version 2.0 era of autonomous vehicle development.'

But asTechCrunchobserved,its not just the size of this monster round thats notable, but the quality of the investors that the round attracted.'

Sequoias participation with its largest investment yet in the autonomous vehicle space is confirmation of how Aurora has emerged as the marquee player in just two years since its 2017 founding. T. Rowe Price brings savvy about macro trends and long-term thinking. Amazon brings its legendary logistics expertise and focus on delivering great customer experiences.'

In the end, its the people along for the ride who make a road trip truly memorable. As Aurora scales up to pursue a technology that is likely to play a huge role in how people live and work in the 21st century, it continues to attract great investors with long-term outlooks, key OEMs like Volkswagen and Hyundai, and world-class engineering and operations talent.'

And at the helm of it all is Chris Urmson, who has a great vision for how he wants to navigate the uncharted territory that lies ahead for Aurora. While world-class engineering talent is needed to solve all the challenges that autonomous vehicle technology poses, Chris knows that proceeding in a way that also incorporates the highest levels of judiciousness, ethics, and integrity are key to an effort with such transformational impact. Thus, Chris is committed to building breakthrough technologies with the right people, who along with their their engineering, operational, and other talents bring a human-first mindset to their work.'

I cant wait to see where he takes Aurora next.'

Great to see Aurora making so much progress on its quest to deliver the benefits of self-driving technology safely, quickly, and broadly!'

ARTICLE: HOW THE LESSONS OF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES HELP BUILD GREAT TEAMS AND COMPANIES'

Since launching the Masters of Scale podcast, Ive interviewed more than 50 amazing entrepreneurs, and helped them share their experiences and lessons from building iconic companies. Now, for the first time in the history of the podcast, the tables have been turned.'

My friend June Cohen, the co-founder of WaitWhat, the company behind Masters of Scale, steps out from the control booth to interview me about *my* entrepreneurial journey. This two-part special episode takes you from my childhood in the Bay Area to my experience blitzscaling companies like PayPal, LinkedIn, and Airbnb as an entrepreneur and investor at Greylock Partners.'

Youll learn how role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons helped me appreciate the power of helping every person play the part of a hero on an epic journey. Youll learn why I think software is a powerful tool for moral inquiry. And Ill share what I learned from the failure of my first startup, SocialNet and how that ultimately led me to co-founding LinkedIn.'

We also dive into one of my favorite theories, about Jedi Tours of Duty. One of the key insights behind my previous book, The Alliance was: If you want to inspire employees, help them understand how their particular tour of duty with the company fits into the arc of their own epic story. Are they a Han Solo, a Luke Skywalker, or a Leia Organa?'

Youll even hear how Peter Thiel took the very same approach when he recruited me to join PayPal. He convinced me that helping him grow PayPal would be a six-month tour of duty that would help me start LinkedIn. And he was right, though it ended up taking three years, not six months!'

As always, Id like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode.What is your epic story or journey? How can you enlist other people in your journey by helping them be the heroes of their own stories? Can you tell if each key person is a Han, Luke, or Leia?'

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

I've been lucky to be able to enlist a stellar roster of entrepreneurs and leaders to help prove my theories of growing a business on the Masters of Scale podcast. And in this very special turning-the-tables episode, WaitWhat Co-founder and CEO June Cohen is the host and I'm the guest. June interviewed me about my own journey to scale and together we prove a theory that the best leaders make everyone a hero in their epic journey to scale."

GreatLeaders_GreatSociety '

When is the 2nd half of that interview going to be released?'

I gain 6000 % boom on my LinkedIn profile'

Mission furniture company mission fabrics partition office furniture chair table roller blind vertical blind sofa ceiling interior furniture manufacturing and order supplier cell no 01732608379.'

ARTICLE: RESPONSIBLE BLITZSCALING'

(This post by Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh.)'

In an ideal world, blitzscaling organizations would embody all the virtues that society might desire from its businessesa diverse and inclusive workforce, a strong sense of responsibility to shareholders and stakeholders, an ample supply of well-paying jobs, and executives who serve as moral role models and leaders of society. The unfortunate truth is that for all the good that blitzscaling produces, blitzscaling organizations can be guilty of the same sins committed by other types of companies, and even face some inherent challenges even when trying to behave responsibly.'

Blitzscaling companies almost always operate in fiercely competitive markets where in order to survive and thrive, they need to outgrow their rivals. In the best case, they do this by focusing relentlessly on building the business while also trying achieve broader social goals. In the worst case, they try to get big fast by any means necessary.'

These pressures are compounded by the fact that blitzscaling companies grow so quickly that they often become key players in society before theyve had time to fully mature. This can result in problematic corporate cultures, adversarial relationships with regulators, and questionable decision-making.'

These challenges are real, but shouldnt discourage us from blitzscaling. The art lies in marrying responsibility and velocity so that you are able to successfully capture the first-scaler advantage, while still developing and adhering to a strong moral compass.'

Testifying before Congress in 1911, future Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis argued, I think we are in a position, after the experience of the last 20 years, to state two things: In the first place, that a corporation may well be too large to be the most efficient instrument of production and of distribution, and, in the second place, whether it has exceeded the point of greatest economic efficiency or not, it may be too large to be tolerated among the people who desire to be free. '

We disagree with this position on the harmfulness of scale in todays world. First, Brandeis was speaking during the era of trusts, when figures like J.P. Morgan consolidated American industry into powerful, giant companies like U.S. Steel. But we believe that todays blitzscalers are qualitatively different than Gilded Age trusts. Those trusts held virtual monopolies over the supply of key physical resources like steel and oil. Consumers had no alternatives, and were forced to do business with them. In contrast, companies like Apple and Amazon have to win their customers every day, and if they fail to do so, those consumers can simply buy Dell laptops and shop at Walmart. '

Second, we also believe that while big can sometimes be bad, big can also be great. Scale creates dominant companies, but scale also creates enormous value. The smartphones we love, for example, are mass-market consumer electronics that depend on economies of scale. While Brandeis is right that society needs to prevent monopolies that block technology or business innovation in the way that the old AT&T monopoly suppressed the progress of telecommunications, todays largest companies have actually enabled more innovation and the creation of even more value, by providing a platform for everything from business productivity software (Slack) to entertainment (Netflix). Even the concentration of capital that scale has produced isnt all bad; it has allowed blitzscalers to tackle moonshots like space travel (SpaceX), and autonomous vehicles (Googles Waymo) that may dramatically improve our lives. '

Its true that, as with anything in life, blitzscaling produces winners and losers. Startups can and will fail, and all entrepreneurial enterprises create risk for founders, employers, and investors. But at the same time, they also create the possibility for new businesses, new innovations, and new jobs. The most successful modern societies err on the side of freedom, rather than trying to outlaw all risks, and on the whole we are all better off because we allow entrepreneurs to take those risks. '

(This essay was adapted from our latest book, Blitzscaling. To learn more about how to blitzscale responsibly, visit Blitzscaling.com to order your copy of our book Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies.)'

'

Blitzscaling is designed to create impact on a massive global scale. And that's why it's so important to pursue blitzscaling responsibly, in ways that produce positive, broad-based benefits for the world. #blitzscaling #entrpreneurism"

ARTICLE: WHEN TO THROW OUT THE RULES'

(This post by Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh.)'

One of the reasons that many businesspeople (especially experienced executives) have problems grasping and applying the principles of Blitzscaling is that it requires you to throw out many of the normal rules of business. Careful planning, cautious investment, and courteous service may end up being tossed aside in favor of rapid guesstimates, inefficient capital expenditures, and ignoring angry customers. Why would you ever want to pursue such a risky and unintuitive course of action? In a word, speed.'

The objective of Blitzscaling is to achieve lightning growth despite the increased risks and costs. The only circumstance under which it makes sense is when, whether for offensive or defensive reasons, speed into the market is the critical success strategy.'

The classic offensive reason for Blitzscaling is to achieve a critical mass that confers a lasting competitive advantage. Sometimes, this is simply a matter of economies of scale, as with Amazon or Walmart. Other times, critical mass triggers network effects, as with Uber or Airbnb. It's important not to confuse critical mass with first-mover advantage; rather, it is a first-scaler advantage. Being first only helps if you're also able to achieve critical mass."

Another offensive reason for Blitzscaling is the opportunity to be the first to climb a steep learning curve. Some opportunities, such as self-driving cars, require you to solve hard, complex problems. The more rapidly you scale, the more data you have to drive learning (or train machine learning), which improves your product, making it easier to scale further in the market.'

Yet despite these offensive reasons to scale, the most common driver of Blitzscaling is the threat of competition. Without competition, you would still want to achieve critical mass and climb the learning curve, but you might prefer a less risky, more gradual approach to growth. With competition, you have to ask yourself, Can somebody else realize this opportunity before me? If the answer is yes, moving faster reduces the risk of competition more than it raises the risk of execution. The more intense the competition, the faster you should try to move.'

One of the reasons that startups tend to rely on Blitzscaling is that speed is one of the primary advantages they hold vis a vis large companies. Startups can act quickly to capitalize on the new opportunities created by technological advances. If they dawdle and proceed at the same pace as a big company, they're fighting those companies on an even playing field, which means that the big company's resources will likely confer massive advantage."

Once you decide to Blitzscale, the key question you need to ask and answer is, How can we move faster? This isn't simply a matter of working harder or smarter. It's doing things that other companies normally don't do, or choosing not to do things that they do. For example, one blitzscaling tactic that Uber has employed to speed up engineering hiring is to ask each new hire for the contact information of his or her three smartest engineering friends. Uber then mails each of those contacts an offer letter. Clearly, this is riskier than actually interviewing and evaluating candidates. But it is also clearly faster, and has allowed Uber to grow its engineering team (which is typically a major challenge) at higher rate."

Raise more money than you need.'

Entrepreneurs try to avoid raising more capital than they need. Raising excessive amounts of capital dilutes their stake in the company, and introduces a preference overhang (all that money has to be paid back before the founders and employees get to participate in the upside). Yet when Blitzscaling, raising excessive amounts can be an effective technique. The capital increases your optionalityif you need to invest in growth, you can do much more without having to go through the time-consuming process of raising another round. A major raise can also have signalling effectsit helps convince the rest of the world that your company is likely to emerge as the market leader, and can discourage investors from backing additional competitors.'

Be willing to tolerate organizational messiness and unhappiness.'

When Blitzscaling, speed is more important than having a well-run organization. Under normal circumstances, you should strive for organizational coherence and stability. Chaotic, unstable organizations make employees nervous and hurt morale. But when you're Blitzscaling, you may need to tolerate bad management to maintain maximum speed (though you should never tolerate the unethical or illegal)."

You may need to reorganize the company three times in a single year, or repeatedly churn through members of your management team. When your organization is growing 300% per year, you might have to promote people before they're ready, and then swap them out if they sink rather than swim. You don't have time to be patient and wait for things to work out; you have to act quickly and decisively. There's always a lot of change, and much of it isn't voluntary. You're building the team and company simultaneously. In the interests of speed, you might even surprise or blindside your people to cut down the time required to make and implement important decisions."

One common symptom of this messiness is the presence of problems relating to job titles. You don't have time for a careful promotion process. You might either do nothing, and just keep everyone's titles the same even as they fail to reflect organizational progress and importance. Or you might do things that no rational company would do, like deliberately inflating job titles to keep people happy, counting on the ability to correct the situation later. Either way, you're taking on organizational risk in exchange for being able to focus efforts wholly on growth."

Don't set your culture, evolve it."

It's fashionable these days to emphasize the importance of culture. Culture is important, and can be a critical tool for Blitzscaling because it allows executives to drive a cohesive and unified organization. However, especially in the early stages of a startup, it's a mistake to devote substantial resources to defining the culture. You can't set a culture at 10 employees, and expect it to be unaffected by the next 100 employees you hire. Instead, recognize that your culture is going to evolve, and rather than hiring for static fit, hire people you think can add to the culture you're building."

If you're not embarrassed by your initial product, you've launched too late."

It's not that you should strive to produce a bad product. Rather, if you need to choose between getting to the market quickly with an imperfect product, or getting to the market slowly with a perfect product, choose the imperfect product nearly every time. Getting to the market fast allows you to start getting the feedback you need to improve the product. Any product that you've carefully refined based on your instincts, rather than real user reactions and data, is likely to be wrong, and will require significant iteration anyways. Speed really matters, and launching early lets you climb the learning curve to a great product faster."

Ask for forgiveness, not permission.'

When you're a large company with a lot to lose, it may make sense to take the cautious approach of getting every potential stakeholder to sign off your decision (though we doubt this is true in most cases). But when you're a startup, the default outcome is that if you fail to act, you will die. You don't have time to wait for everyone to weigh in, especially when folks are in Asia for a key customer meeting, or are slammed just trying to keep the servers running. As long as the decision doesn't have below the waterline implications, have a bias towards action."

Invest in throwaway work.'

Engineers hate doing throwaway work. Not only is it wasteful, it offends their sense of efficiency. The classic goal is to build your product right the first time, so you only have to build it once. But when you're Blitzscaling, incurring technical debt is the rule, not the exception. To prioritize speed, you might write code that isn't scalable and wait for things to start breaking before you build QA tools and processes. All of these decisions will lead to problems later on, but you might not have a later on if you take too long to build the product, which means that a hack that takes 1/10th the time may be more useful than an elegantly engineered solution, even if it has to be thrown away later."

Let success drive your brand, rather than using your brand to drive success.'

One of classic rules of marketing is that you only have one chance to make a first impression. On the Internet, that's largely untrue. People discover and rediscover brands and products all the time. What matters is moving quickly to achieve critical mass; success drives the brand. What would real marketing experts say about brands like Google, Facebook, or LinkedIn? Too confusing. Too generic. Too difficult to say. Yet because of the success these companies have achieved, their brands have become iconic. How many people realize that Facebook refers to a paper booklet that contains the photographs of incoming college freshmen?"

Hire salespeople for now, even if they aren't scalable."

Entrepreneurs are sometimes advised to avoid hiring salespeople until they are able to secure a VP Sales who can scale the company to $100 million in sales. This is hogwash. The salespeople you need to start Blitzscaling are totally different from the salespeople you'll need at scale. When you're trying to sell your product for the first time, you need aggressive, adaptable salespeople who aren't big on following rules. By the time you've achieved scale, you'll need thorough, process-oriented salespeople who can keep a machine running smoothly. You're not going to find one person who is great at both."

Ignore your customers!'

The fundamental rule of customer service has long been, The customer is always right. But for many Blitzscaling customers, the key rule is, Provide whatever service you can as long as it doesn't slow us down...and that may mean no service! Many Blitzscaling startups will offer email support only, or no support at all, relying on users to find and help each other on discussion forums."

A final word of cautionjust because you can Blitzscale doesn't mean that you should. Throwing out the rules doesn't guarantee success any more than following the rules does. In the early days of LinkedIn, we knew that achieving a critical mass of users was going to be a challenge. We had to do a lot of education to get professionals to understand our value proposition. Most didn't realize the power of their networks, and how technology could help them enhance, extend, and leverage them better. One approach, which quite a number of people recommended we follow, was to raise a large amount of venture capital and embark on an aggressive advertising campaign to accelerate user growth. This would be a classic example of Blitzscalingsacrificing efficiency for growth. But we decided against this strategy; we felt that keeping our burn rate lower would allow us to wait for the market to catch up to our point of view. As we pursued our slow and steady strategy, the people who recommended growth warned us that our competitors would leave us behind. We weren't worried and so didn't feel a defensive reason to blitzscale. If the market conditions aren't right for hypergrowth, premature Blitzscaling can kill a company. (Sadly, premature Blitzscaling can sometimes kill a nascent market by poisoning the well so dramatically that investors and entrepreneurs avoid the space; WebVan's notorious failure kept most players out of the grocery space for over a decade.)"

If taking on additional risk and discomfort doesn't actually confer an advantage, it's better to follow the rules for the time being so that when Blitzscaling does become appropriate, your organization can be efficient, well-maintained, and readier to scale."

Many of the principles that underlie Blitzscaling are high-risk and counter-intuitive. Here's why -- and when -- you should employ them! "

ARTICLE: BLITZSCALING WITH SATYA NADELLA & REID HOFFMAN'

Blitzscaling is the strategy that leading entrepreneurs have implemented to build strong, enduring companies. The techniques allow for startups and incumbents across any industry to scale at rapid rates and outdistance the competition.'

This episode of Greymatter is a discussion from Greylocks Blitzscaling Dinner with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Greylock partner Reid Hoffman. The two visionaries discuss the importance of consistency when scaling company culture, tactics to push forward new strategies with your board of directors, and steps to mitigate the unintended risks of blitzscaling.'

Greylocks invite-only event hosted CEOs, company founders and top CXOs to discuss the impact of blitzscaling across todays leading companies and ways that Microsoft is applying these techniques as an established company. Below are key takeaways and quotes from the discussion.'

The themes of this episode are covered inReid Hoffmanandco-author Chris Yehs new book,Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies. To learn even more about blitzscaling, you can listen to more episodeshere.'

Consistency is key to building a great company culture. Building or renewing company culture is not a one time transformation, but a continuous process led by leadership. To set precedence, founders should figure out company values in the beginning and live those values over the lifetime of the company. Over time, employees will know what the company stands for and attract new hires who would naturally fit in with your environment.'

The board of directors will understandably be cautious when you introduce a new blitzscaling strategy which tends to involve some risks. To ease fears and push forward your agenda, founders can implement three techniques: design an evaluation framework that enables the board to track performance, add a board member who believes in the new strategy and can help push forward your effort, and invest in board education. New strategies and new technologies can be difficult to understand. Founders should set up board training sessions to provide further insight and explain why specific risks are worth taking.'

Unintended consequences can happen as organizations rapidly scale. Its the founders ethical responsibility to consider the negative impacts each decision may have the company or product has on customers and society. To maintain safety of customers, founder should have build in processes early on that are meant to mitigate unintended consequences. To enhance company trust, founders should implement safety and ethical regulations that are agile to allow for innovation over time.'

In 2016, Reid and Chris stress-tested the ideas of in blitzscaling by teaching the classCS183C: Technology-enabled Blitzscalingat Stanford University with the help of their friends (and fellow Stanford alumni)Allen BlueandJohn Lilly. To learn even more about the strategy behind blitzscaling from guests including Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, Gixo CEO Selina Tobaccowala and many more, you cancheck out the recordings from the class here.'

Always enjoy my conversations with Satya Nadella. On the latest Greymatter podcast, we discuss: - the importance of consistency when scaling company culture - tactics to push forward new strategies with your board of directors - steps to mitigate the unintended risks of blitzscaling'

I hope that PayPal can beat Alipay in mainland China'

So Satya and Reid - does strategy eat culture for breakfast or does culture eat strategy for breakfast ?'

Purchased.'

nice'

Thought provoking article,Thank you Satya and Reid for sharing. '

dear sir, if you have vacancies let me known. I am doing pak oman micro finance bank'

ARTICLE: HOW TO SCALE YOURSELF, FROM FOUNDER TO LEADER'

By Reid Hoffman and Chris Yeh'

All founders need some universal skills to succeed. They need the ability to take bold risks in pursuit of a vision that isnt self-evident to others. They need the ability to learn (since theyre trying to do something brand-new). And to play a long-term role at their start-up turned scale-up, they need the ability to live with and resolve the inevitable paradoxes of being a founder. When I asked Dropbox founder Drew Houston to look back on his experience, he told me, I think a lot of entrepreneurs start with a lot of insecurity about what they dont know. What you want is not to be paralyzed by it, but to harness itto use that nervous energy to learn and make yourself better. Youve got to keep your personal learning curve ahead of the companys growth curve.'

Maintaining a certain humility and a sense of perspective can help you navigate the changes in your role as you blitzscale your company. If you truly want to blitzscale, then speed has to take priority over everythingincluding your own ego.'

There are only three ways to scale yourself: delegation, amplification, and just plain making yourself better.'

Can you find, hire, and manage good people, then transfer work over to them so you can tackle the challenges youre uniquely suited to tackle? Many founders are so talented that they have a hard time letting go of tasks once they start performing them. They often think things like, Will someone else be able to do this as well as I can? The answer is almost certainly, No, especially not at first, but theyll probably figure it out over time, just like you did.'

Start-ups get off the ground thanks to the individual talent and hard work of founders like Mark Zuckerberg and Brian Chesky, but they blitzscale into giant companies like Facebook and Airbnb because these founders learn how to delegate.'

One of the most important aspects of delegation, and often the most challenging for a founder, is to hire an executive and hand off functional leadership. For example, a lot of great founders are product people. Initial product/market fit and success are achieved because of their product instincts. But as the company grows, these founders will almost always need to hire an executive to take over leadership of the product organizationits too important to be a founders part-time job.'

A key technique I use to overcome this challenge is to picture the hire as a specific living, breathing person rather than as a role written down on a piece of paper. When you try to picture an abstract head of product, for example, you might have a hard time visualizing this faceless entity doing a better job than you are. But when you picture a particular individual (say, Joe Zadeh of Airbnb), all of a sudden your mind shifts to thinking, Wow, just imagine how awesome it would be to have someone like this running our product team. It might be difficult to hire this paragonexecutives who are that good are hard to pry loose from their current companiesbut it doesnt hurt to try, and at the least, youll have a great reference to which you can compare the people you actually consider hiring.'

Rather than delegate work youre doing to others, can you hire people who amplify the work you do? The goal here isnt to free you up from your work so that you can do other things; its to make the things you do much more impactful. This is actually one of the areas Ive tried to develop and refine in my own life.'

Like many founders and executives, I have an amazing executive assistant, Saida Sapieva, to help me with scheduling and logistics. But Ive discovered that you can take the concept of amplification much further. For example, I was one of the first start-up leaders in Silicon Valley to borrow the chief of staff concept from the realm of politics and established corporations. Unlike a traditional assistant or even a technical assistant, your chief of staff should amplify your business impact: he or she should be a businessperson who can not only make certain decisions for you but also triage the important decisions that you have to make yourself. A chief of staff can also make sure that all the people who want to meet or interact with you are briefed in advance so that your time together can be as efficient and effective as possible.'

My first chief of staff, Ben Casnocha, was a successful author and entrepreneur before we began working together; my second, David Sanford, had worked with me at LinkedIn and had also been an entrepreneur (and a restaurateur!). It turned out that Ben and David were better at organizing my own life than I was; Ive become significantly more productive since they started amplifying my efforts. To learn more about the role and value of a chief of staff, I recommend that you read Bens essay on the topic, 10,000 Hours with Reid Hoffman, which you can find on his personal website, Casnocha.com.'

Once you begin to appreciate the power of amplification, you can find many ways to scale yourself. For example, one of the things you need to do is to process information about your company, your industry, and the world as a whole. I have a freelance researcher on my team, Brett Bolkowy, who helps me learn new things and answer key questions by finding the best information on any particular topic. Another key team member, Ian Alas, helps me with creative projects like the visual summaries I prepare for my books. The slide shows he created for my book The Startup of You have been viewed over fifteen million times. Now thats amplification!'

Nor am I unique in this. For example, Mark Zuckerberg has a substantial team to help him manage his social media communications so that when he travels and meets people, he can maximize the impact of his interactions.'

Trusted employees, freelancers, or even a team of outside consultants can be your amplifiers. The official nature of the relationship is less important than having assistance that you can trust.'

Because your company grows and changes so quickly as you blitzscale, its crucial for you to figure out how to make yourself better just as quickly so that you dont become the bottleneck that holds your company back. As our friend Jerry Chen likes to say, There are no job descriptions for founders. If the role doesnt change, theres something wrong.'

Since youre going to face new challenges during every stage of blitzscaling, you have to make yourself into a learning machine. My friend Elon Musk is a great example. He dropped out of Stanfords PhD program in applied physics because he thought he could learn more on his own! He started SpaceX and Tesla by learning literal rocket science and carmaking. So how do you accelerate your learning curve so that you can learn more faster? The key is to stand, as Isaac Newton wrote, on the shoulders of giants.'

This means talking with other smart people, often, so that you can learn from their successes and failures. Its usually easier and less painful to learn from anothers mistakes than from your own. When I need to learn about a new subject, Ill definitely devour some books on the topic, but I almost always supplement this reading by seeking out dialogue with leading experts in the field. Brian Chesky at Airbnb, another amazing learning machine, does something similar, seeking advice from mentors like Sheryl Sandberg and Warren Buffett. Brian told our classat Stanford, If you find the right source, you dont have to read everything. Ive had to learn to seek out the experts. I wanted to learn about safety, so I went to George Tenet, the exhead of the CIA. Even if you cant meet the best, you can read about the best. Brian lives this advice; he got many of his ideas by assiduously poring over biographies of great entrepreneurs like Walt Disney.'

Another helpful approach to seeking mentorship is to get help from experts who might be less famous than the Sheryl Sandbergs of the world, but who have faced (and solved) similar issues in the recent past. In an interview for Reids Masters of Scale podcast, Dropboxs Drew Houston described how he tries to learn from fellow entrepreneurs who are on the same journey:'

In addition to seeking help on an ad hoc basis, I believe its a good idea to be systematic about learning from others. I advise entrepreneurs to have a personal board of advisers or board of directors who can proffer advice and help you fill the gaps in your knowledge. For example, I have a set of informal advisers who help me learn about the areas that matter to me, including very specific topics like virality or people management. If youre serious about someday blitzscaling a company, you should think of your mentors as a board of directors. Regularly report to them on your progress, and ask them how you can do better. Everyone needs feedback. Brian Chesky, for example, likes to say, Im shameless about getting feedback. He and I have a scheduled dinner every month where (among other things) we share what weve learned and provide feedback. Leveraging a board like this can help you manage risks and increase the potential upside of your actions.'

This may sound like a lot of work, but its important to leave yourself time and space for reflection and feedback. Its easy to get caught up in an endless to-do list and to lose sight of what is important. Thats one of the things I learned from Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg.

Mark and Sheryl meet first thing every Monday and at the end of every Fridayno matter how busy they are or what else has come up. The Friday meeting is especially important because it gives them time to look back over the week and reflect on what theyve learned.'

You might feel like you cant afford to take time out from your busy schedule to make yourself better. After all, you might think, everyone is counting on me. This feeling, while natural, is counterproductive. Netflix CEO Reed Hastings warned our Stanford class, [When I was running Pure Software,] I felt like investing in me was selfish. I thought, I should be working. I was invited to join YPO [Young Presidents Organization], but I thought, I cant take a day off. I was too busy chopping wood to sharpen the axe. I should have spent more time with other entrepreneurs. I should have done yoga or meditation. I didnt understand that by making myself better, I was helping the company, even if I was away from work. Plus, when you model the behavior of taking the time to improve yourself, you help encourage the rest of the company to develop a culture of learning.'

'

ARTICLE: INTRODUCING BLITZSCALING'

What will be the enduring, market-defining companies of the future? Where will they come from? And what are the modern secrets of Silicon Valley? How do we use those lessons to help every region of both the U.S. and the world build scale industries and economies?'

I have tried to address these questions in my latest book Blitzscaling, which is released tomorrow, October 9. Ive been working on this book for over three years, and along the way, weve explored and refined these ideas in a course at Stanford and the Masters of Scale podcast. A lot has happened in the tech industry in the past 36 months, and some of these lessons have helped make the book even more relevant.'

Chris Yeh and I wrote Blitzscaling to rectify what seemed like a major oversight. Its easy to find guidance on how to start a company, but surprisingly difficult to get good ideas on how to scale a company. The books which focused on scaling were mainly concerned with the challenges facing small business owners, rather than the very different challenges of building a global market leader.'

This book is for entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, and entire corporations: those who are creating the future. This book is also for anyone else who wants to understand how certain technologies will scale to change the world, through blitzscaling global companies.'

My hope for this book is that its words will serve as a mentor for all the entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs around the world who are trying to make a difference. Blitzscaling is too good a technique to be limited to Silicon Valley and China, and we have too many problems that need to be solved at lightning speed.'

If youre working on such problems, this book can help you in these important efforts.'

'

To learn more about the book, including where you can get it, visit www.blitzscaling.com. '

For a quick introduction to the book's ideas, enjoy the trailer below."

'

Blitzscaling is too good a technique to be limited to Silicon Valley and China, and we have too many problems that need to be solved at lightning speed.'

ARTICLE: IS SOCIAL MEDIA GOOD OR BAD FOR US? YES.'

Each new communications medium writing, newspapers, radio, television has both created essential progress and posed new and potentially harmful challenges to society.'

The fundamental lesson we need to learn from our history is not that we should halt or reverse innovation, but rather that we need to evolve new technology and its interface with society. Each time in the past that we have invented such technology, we have found new and unique solutions to manage that emerging communications medium to help us create a stronger, better society.'

Today, that emerging communications medium is social media. Social media connects us, and that has both positive and negative consequences. It surfaces our conflicts and allegiances both for better and worse. In order to achieve positive progress, we need to shape the evolution of the technology and how we use it rather than simply attempting to restrict it with broad regulation.'

For example, in the past few years since Brexit, the US election, and other world-shaping events, people have argued that tech platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube contribute to political turmoil throughout the world. In the United States, progressives argue that a reality television star wouldn't have been elected president without Russian interference on those platforms, stoking calls for antitrust action to break them up. One intelligent call that I disagree with is Tim Wu and his new book Curse of Bigness. Conservatives counter that these same social platforms are silencing conservative voices and call for government regulation to ensure that their opinions are heard. Caught in between, social media companies try to constructively engage with both the right and the left domestically while rooting out foreign influences from antagonistic nations like Russia and Iran. Both of the political perspectives above overlook the underlying problem: We haven't agreed on a set of goals for how social media should impact civil society."

Our polarized environment encourages and amplifies partisan conflicts, and this inhibits social progress. We need to collectively debate and then decide how the concepts of free speech and dialogue should evolve and adapt to new technologies like social media. For example, how do we distinguish between opinions that we disagree with, and factually false statements? Simply treating every contrary opinion as fake news is a denial of reality, and prevents any possibilities of mutual discovery of truth and agreement. Thus, broad use of the label fake news prevents any progress in our discourse. On the other hand, making a false statement usually isn't deemed a crime, which means that we have to make cultural and societal decisions about how to deal with such actions. To do this, we need dialog and reasoning rather than simply shouting into the Twitter void. Until we collectively reconcile these fundamental issues, calling for hasty action is just political posturing to score #trending points or clickbait to drive pageviews. What these flames of outrage generally accomplish is setting our own house on fire."

In my new book, Blitzscaling, I describe the process by which the fastest-moving, most adaptive startups grow into enduring market leaders, and argue for the economic and social benefits of rapid scaling. Scale has trade-offs and negatives, but these are generally heavily outweighed by its benefits and positives, such as innovative products, lower costs, jobs in new industries and with regard to social media specifically massively increased communications and information sharing across society. Simply arguing that big is bad and small is good is catchy but unhelpful. Critics of scale should point to specific problems and solutions, while supporters of scale should point to specific benefits.'

While blitzscaling as a strategy is relevant across industries and geographies, it's hard to talk about blitzscaling without also talking about about the current state of social tech companies like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. For example, some have argued that successful blitzscaling has made Facebook too big, and that we would be better off if the company were broken up into multiple companies, or if the social media landscape had evolved to feature a larger number of smaller social networks instead."

This argument comes in response to real world problems. In the past few years, we have seen antagonistic nation states abuse these platforms to interfere with US and other democratic elections. Domestically, everyone from passionate activists to partisan fame seekers have used these platforms to rally one group, attack another, or both, often with little regard for civility. We are still living with the consequences of this abuse today.'

But there are a couple of serious problems with this argument. First, it's not Facebook's size that caused the issues. Size makes a platform attractive to hackers, but it also gives that platform more resources to defend itself. If there were, say, five smaller social networks in place of Facebook, that would probably make the situation far worse, because each would be more vulnerable to attack, and when serious problems arose, it would be harder to track down the bad behavior and figure out how to thwart it. During the past few years, significant political manipulation by foreign operatives occurred in smaller networks like 4Chan as well. Bigness didn't cause that manipulation, and reducing bigness wouldn't have prevented it. Also, it still wouldn't solve the problem of providing a space where people with different opinions could constructively debate various points of view."

Furthermore, restricting the growth of US companies will not and does not restrict the growth of companies in other nations. Consider what would have happened if the leading social network in the United States was the China-based WeChat instead of US-based Facebook or Twitter. Investigating and responding to foreign manipulation would be much more difficult if not impossible if the platform in question wasn't operated by an American company. It is substantially more difficult to enforce American laws and cultural norms when a company's primary operations are an ocean away."

There are certainly situations when big is bad. The AT&T monopoly on telephony hampered technological innovation for decades. Without a breakup, we might still be paying $1 per minute to make long-distance calls on our landline phones, rather than connecting with anyone in the world, anytime, using iPhones or Android devices. And growing big does create a greater moral obligation to consider the consequences of a company's behavior; massive scale increases potential negative and positive impact. It's precisely this reason that social media companies should have taken the threat of political manipulation more seriously, more quickly. But I believe that the instances of big is bad are substantially outweighed by the instances of big is good. The key objective is limiting the problems that come with scale while accelerating the benefits."

A step change in technology requires a step change in our approach to managing its effects. Instead of proposing to restrict company size or slow feature development, we need to ask, How do we allow companies to operate a viable business, protect the privacy and personal data of consumers, and make social media a more welcoming place for different opinions and constructive debate? As we think of potential solutions, we can enter into dialogue with companies like Facebook and Twitter to run experiments and refine those fixes. For example, if we set out to make social media a more welcoming place for different opinions, what would the dashboard for that intervention look like? Would it measure the prevalence of different voices? Would it provide a fact-checking index or score for every news source or article? Those are the kinds of decisions that should be openly discussed and debated. Facebook and others have experimented with early versions of these, and I believe that further iteration and improvement is important. Once the key attributes of a dashboard are agreed upon through dialogue that represents the breadth and diversity of our society then questions like does this require regulation? can be addressed.'

We can never completely eliminate all harm a rhetorical and useless goal but we can work with social media companies to both minimize the harm from these attacks and maximize the benefits of this new medium, to create a strong net positive. Together, as a country, we have decided to adopt laws to discourage libel and hate speech. These dont tell us what to say, but they do inform the words we choose. We set up intelligence agencies to monitor the activities of unfriendly nations, and to defend our infrastructure, including social media companies, against their attacks.'

We now need to figure out how to evolve our norms, institutions, and rules for the new media. Market forces do help with this task, as companies in competitive environments respond to customer preferences over time. There will be some new challenges in scale companies with network effects. For example, if a small number of tech companies provide the primary medium of communication and information exchange, then how does the public establish trust with the governance and leadership of that company? Some react immediately to suggest government regulators but I think that intentional transparency and dialog can establish much better trust both now and in the future than new government bureaucracies. Put another way: would you rather have congress legislating the future shape of technology implemented by an agency, or market forces together with public transparency and discussion?'

Social networks, like all new communications mediums, have tremendous potential for good. We shouldn't forget how much these platforms have enriched our lives by allowing us to stay in touch with or reconnect with family and friends. They have also become a powerful platform for connecting with strangers to make an impact in the world. As one example amongst millions, in May of this year, an ordinary couple, Charlotte and Dave Willner, launched a Facebook crowdfunding campaign that raised over $20 million to help the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) to help reunite families being separated at the US-Mexico border. Or consider how Facebook has helped build communities for groups like cancer survivors or parents of autistic children to support each other."

No question, foreign hacking of social media is objectively bad. Yes, isolating ourselves in groups where we only talk with the like-minded is damaging for democracy but note significantly that this filter bubble is not unique to social media: consider talk radio, cable news, and local media monopolies like Sinclair Communications. Yes, sharing information without some reasonable commitments to truth creates many problems. But the solution to these challenges isn't to shut down or dramatically slow the development of the medium. Both individual citizens and their elected representatives should be part of a dialogue about these issues and agree on a set of goals and how to measure our progress towards them. Only then should we discuss how we implement those goals with mechanisms that could range on a continuum from self-regulation and voluntary action, to new federal regulation, to new laws."

Let's remember the original vision of social media: An open society where people are more connected, and where diverse voices can be heard. Early social media was like this: suddenly many people were finding a space to speak in a new open land. Now that land has become a massive city, and so realizing that vision will take more hard work. We will need to make conscious, long-term decisions about how we individually and collectively ask the technology companies that operate our social media platforms to encourage truth and civil engagement, while defending us against foreign interference and domestic trolling. This will be a long and never-ending process; Americans have been wrestling with the role of various forms of media since the days we were a British colony. We have successfully integrated each previous example of new media into our civil society. While individuals, organizations, and governments still find fault with newspapers, radio, and television, they have long functioned as an integral part of American life because they improve it. Social media is no different, and I believe that the increased connection and freedom of expression it ultimately brings will be worth the cost and messiness of devising new norms and policies."

The fundamental lesson we need to learn from our history is not that we should halt or reverse innovation, but rather that we need to evolve new technology and its interface with society.'

ARTICLE: HOW WE WROTE BLITZSCALING'

Many people often ask, How did you write this book? When a simple answer makes the most sense, we usually say, With a lot of hard work. But for those who are curious about how Blitzscaling came to be, I thought I'd ask my co-author Chris Yeh to tell the story."

The following is a guest post from Chris Yeh, the co-author of Blitzscaling (available everywhere next week on October 9) and The Alliance.'

After we finished writing The Alliance, we took a few months off before thinking about the next book. By the spring of 2015, we were playing around with a couple different book concepts, when Reid came to me with the idea of writing about scaleups instead of startups. People always talk about how Silicon Valley is a great place to start a company, Reid pointed out, But I seldom hear them talk about why Silicon Valley is a great place to scale a company. The instant he told me, I was drawn to that core idea, which resonated with my own experience.'

A quick survey of the existing literature found a few books on scaling, but most of those appeared to focus on traditional small businesses, rather than the kind of extreme growth that drives Silicon Valley. We also began thinking about how the ideas were applicable outside Silicon Valley; Reid had visited China many times, and had observed how successful the ecosystem there had become at scaling up businesses. We decided to pursue the concept.'

The first part of our writing process, paradoxically enough, doesn't feature a lot of writing. During this phase, we spend most of our time simply talking about the ideas, trying to fit them into a framework, and thinking about potential stories and examples. We spent many weekend hours exploring these ideas, which is just one of many reasons why our wives are thanked in the acknowledgments! It was during this phase that some of the core ideas of Blitzscaling, like our definition of the five stages, or the key concept of prioritizing speed over efficiency, began to emerge."

These ideas don't spring forth fully-fledged, a la Athena from Zeus' skull. For example, we played around with a number of different ways to describe the stages, including using the metaphor of military units (Squad, Platoon, Company, Brigade, Army) or boats (Canoe, Longboat, Yacht, Schooner, Clipper). But because blitzscaling has a such profound impact on society, we were drawn to a metaphor that reflected the broadest possible experience, hence our adoption of the canonical stages of Family, Tribe, Village, City, and Nation. Each of these stages describes how we live, and captures the radical change that occurs from stage to stage."

Over the summer of 2015, we wrote a book's worth of content on how to blitzscale each aspect of your company (from the role of the founder to the company's culture) through each of the stages of blitzscaling. The basic cadence was fairly standardReid and I would get together, talk about a specific set of ideas (one of Reid's superpowers is the ability to create mental frameworks for understanding complex issues, seemingly at will!), and based on our conversation, I would go off and draft another section or chapter of the book. By the end of the summer, we were feeling pretty good."

That fall, we stress-tested the ideas of the book by teaching the class CS183C: Technology-enabled Blitzscaling at our alma mater, Stanford University with the help of our friends (and fellow Stanford alumni) Allen Blue and John Lilly. Our thesis going into the class was that we'd share the ideas of the book, learn what was missing, make a few minor tweaks, and publish the book in 2016."

What we discovered was that blitzscaling was so counter-intuitive, that we had put the cart before the horse by writing a playbook on how to blitzscale before we had adequately made the case for the who, what, where, when, and why of blitzscaling.'

It was gut-check time. We had a tough decision to make. Should we simply follow our original plan, and release a blitzscaling playbook in 2016? That would be the least work, but our experience with the class made that option feel inadequate. Or should we set aside an entire book's worth of material, and start over, nearly from scratch, to write a very different, more philosophical book? We hadn't planned our lives around starting over, and the prospect was pretty daunting."

In the end, we decided that the ideas of blitzscaling were important enough that writing a new book would be worth the effort (we hoped). So we began again, starting with articulating the compelling reasons why blitzscaling mattered. At times, it seemed like fate was conspiring against us. The Microsoft / LinkedIn merger kept Reid so busy that we took a multi-month hiatus (though I was able to use some of this time to conduct interviews that produced some of the material in the book), and the 2016 presidential election cycle also diverted crucial time and attention.'

Through it all, we kept working. And as we kept grinding away, it became apparent that the subject was even richer than we thought. We added content on blitzscaling outside of high tech, blitzscaling in other ecosystems, and perhaps most importantly, on how to blitzscale responsibility. By the time we turned in the book, it had grown to be 50% longer than The Start-up of You and 200% longer than The Alliance.'

Throughout the writing process, one of the other key techniques we used was sharing drafts with fellow authors, thinkers, and practitionerseating our own dog food, so to speak, on network intelligence. While it can be difficult to incorporate criticism and feedback, we strongly believe that getting feedback is the best way to boost final qualitythe literary equivalent of Reid's famous dictum, If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late. We tried to thank many of these folks in the acknowledgements. Without them, the book wouldn't be nearly as strong."

Even today, it doesn't really feel like we've truly finished. While the final text for Blitzscaling is, literally, set on paper, we're still engaging with and refining the nuances of blitzscaling in response to how the world continues to change. The blitzscaling playbook needs to change on a weekly basis just to keep up! We plan to be living with these ideas for years to come, and hope that others will join us in evolving and improving the techniques and principles of blitzscaling."

'

To learn more about why, when, and how to blitzscale your organization, visit Blitzscaling.com to order your copy of our upcoming book Blitzscaling: The Lightning-Fast Path to Building Massively Valuable Companies.'

For a quick introduction to the book's ideas, enjoy the trailer below."

'

I asked my co-author Chris Yeh to tell the story of how we wrote our Blitzscaling.'

ARTICLE: THERANOS: BLITZSCALING, BLITZFAILING, OR BLITZFRAUDING?'

Blitzscaling pursuing rapid growth by prioritizing speed over efficiency in the face of uncertainty is the primary way to turn startups into world-changing companies like Amazon, Facebook, and Google. Blitzscaling is risky because it involves committing massive resources while the outcome is far from certain. But in winner-take-most or winner-take-all markets, the biggest risk is allowing a competitor to reach market-dominant scale first. I explore these themes in theTechnology-enabled Blitzscaling classat Stanford University, in myMasters of Scalepodcast, and in my upcoming book,Blitzscaling, co-authored by Chris Yeh.'

Theranos founder and then CEO Elizabeth Holmes spoke to our Stanford class in 2015. Since then, both company and entrepreneur have received sharp criticism for alleged fraud. In an SEC settlement in 2018, Holmes paid a $500,000 fine and relinquished control of the company, though neither she nor the company admitted or denied the SEC's allegations. Holmes has also been indicted on federal wire fraud charges."

Due to these developments, some have suggested taking downthe video of Elizabeth Holmes' visit to our class. Instead, we should learn from Theranos by adding this essay to the video. The courts will resolve the legal issues. But examining the claims about the company's alleged misbehavior (and the world's reactions to that behavior) sheds important light on the broader question of what risks are and are not ethical to take while blitzscaling."

The Theranos story came to light thanks to theinvestigative reporting of theWall Street Journal's John Carreyrou, which he detailed in his book on Theranos,Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a

Silicon Valley Startup. It's an amazing and expansive story. In this essay, I'll examine four of the core key criticisms of Theranos, and the lessons we can learn about responsible blitzscaling."

Outright fraud, such as the SEC's charge that Theranos claimed annual revenues of $100,000,000 when the actual figure was around $100,000, is the simplest issue to address. People should absolutely expect all entrepreneurs including responsible blitzscalers to tell the truth."

Great blitzscaling companies like Amazon and Google didn't need to overstate their revenues or lie about their financials to succeed. Their performance spoke for itself."

In fact, one of the reasons that Theranos appears to have gotten away with its actions for so long is that everyone, including board members, business partners and even reporters, couldn't conceive of the notion that the company would simply lie about so much, so often. Carryrou discussed thisin an interviewwithNew Yorkmagazine when he said: You could make a case that maybe they [reporters who covered Theranos] should have done more reporting beyond interviewing her [Elizabeth Holmes] and her immediate entourage. But how much is a writer/reporter to blame when the subject is bald-face lying to him, too?"

Another important criticism is that Theranos took excessive risks with patient well-being.Carreyou told CNN, "There's no question in mind that she knew there was a risk that she was putting patients in harm's way. The problem was Elizabeth channeled the Silicon Valley culture and way of operating for what was not a traditional tech business it was a medical technology business.

Blitzscaling founders and companies have a moral obligation to do so responsibly. You can pursue rapid growth without giving up your moral compass. Part of this involves considering the level of risk that the company imposes on its customers and the broader ecosystem.'

Blitzscaling inevitably involves risk. You can't eliminate all risk without standing in the way of innovation. The fact that autonomous vehicles sometimes crash doesn't mean we should simply ban them. But you should be explicit about how you're mitigating risk, and how your product or service improves overall outcomes."

Risks vary along at least two important axes. The first axis is the severity of the potential impact on the individual. If you spend $1.99 on an app and it doesn't work, it's not a big deal in your life. If you quit your job to make a living by finding work via that app, that's a much bigger deal, and if product failure could permanently degrade or even end your life mortal risk that's the biggest deal of all, and the standards for ethical behavior become much more stringent."

The second axis measures the scope of the risk how many people might be impacted. If massive scale is involved, the risks are amplified and hence require greater responsibility.'

According to Carreyrou's reporting, Theranos took mortal risks at a massive scale by giving hundreds of thousands of patients inaccurate blood test results that might lead to improper care. Where a responsible blitzscaler would have proceeded cautiously, and with stringent ethical standards, Theranos did the opposite."

One of the ironies is that when Elizabeth Holmes visited our class, she acknowledged this very distinction. When asked about working in a regulated industry, she replied, We are in a very regulated space, so this means you have to build a very different type of company because the stakes are so high and the decision-making is so long-term compared to normal tech companies.'

Another criticism of Theranos is that the company encouraged its team to ignore or even cover up the warning signs about product quality. In an interview that appeared inVox, Carreyrou told a reporter, One of her advisers was Larry Ellison [the billionaire co-founder and CEO of Oracle]. Larry Ellisons advice to her was that in his early years, he was also getting told by the coders and guys creating the software he was selling that this isnt feasible and we cant get it done on time. And [Larry] was always pushing them to deliver and ignoring their complaints. And he told [Elizabeth] to do the same. Of course, that was terrible advice and he was a bad role model.'

At first glance, this might sound similar to my oft-quoted advice to consumer internet entrepreneurs, If you are not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late. When blitzscaling, speed is the primary goal."

But the spirit behind these two approaches is completely different. I don't advise entrepreneurs to ignore complaints; I advise them to launch an unpolished version of their product so that they can begin gathering market feedback as quickly as possible so that they can focus on fixing bugs and adding features that people actually want and need."

In contrast, Carreyrou paints the picture of Theranos that shows a company that was intent on launching by a certain date regardless of product readiness to meet a contractual deadline in its Walgreens partnership, and which was actively ignoring or covering up known problems, rather than fixing them.'

There's a big difference between being embarrassed and being indicted."

Theranos could have approached its situation very differently. For example, the company could have started conducting blood tests at Walgreens with a standard blood draw using existing Siemens blood testing machines. This would have been truthful, and would still have been beneficial to patients because of the added convenience of getting tested without requiring a doctor's order (at least in Arizona). In this scenario, Theranos could have gradually shifted to using its own nanotainer technology when it was actually working. In our book, we describe this as scaling by initially doing things that don't scale. Instead, Theranos claimed to be using its nanotainer technology, but actually diluted pin-prick blood draws with water so that there was enough liquid to use the Siemens machines. The company then adjusted those test results by the level of dilution, producing inaccurate reports."

Selling a compelling vision of the future is a classic part of the entrepreneurial process. Theranos painted a vivid vision of faster, cheaper, more readily available blood tests. But high-integrity entrepreneurs don't try to fool their audience when it comes to what is vision and what is reality. They don't lie and say, Here's what we've accomplished (even though we really didn't). They articulate an optimistic but realistic case: Here's where we are, here's where we want to get, here are our plans to get there, here are the risks, and here's why we believe we will overcome those risks."

One of the many troubling stories described how Theranos leadership reacted after a number of employees resigned after being asked to help the company go live with technology that didn't work.Carreyrou reported in Wiredabout a company all-hands meeting right after the resignations: Still visibly angry, Holmes told the gathered employees that she was building a religion. If there were any among them who didnt believe, they should leave."

While people may joke that some Silicon Valley companies act like obedience-demanding cults (with Apple Stores standing in for marble temples), the fact is that the best companies and leaders build cultures that accept and learn from dissent. Most companies, including giants like Facebook, Google and Microsoft, hold regular all-hands meetings where employees can ask any question, including questioning whether specific company actions help or hinder its mission, rather than being required to demonstrate blind faith.'

Blitzscaling companies build strong cultures on a foundation of rigorous debate and shared values.'

Theranos stands accused of engaging in a wide range of unethical behavior, including outright fraud. It is precisely because of this behavior that we should view Theranos as anexception to, rather than an example of how blitzscaling works.'

Yes, there are real risks that an entrepreneur should take to get to critical scale more quickly, such as raising money (from experienced investors) and launching quickly without waiting until you have a complete and polished product. When the risks are mortal or systemic, you need to have answers for those risks often before you deploy, and always before you scale. Taking these risks helped companies like Facebook and Google become massively successful. They also helped those companies make our lives significantly better overall.'

You don't have to blitzscale alone; almost all successful blitzscalers raise money from, and fill their boards with, experienced venture capitalists. This is not only because blitzscaling requires significant amounts of capital, but also because investors who have prior blitzscaling experience can help founders avoid major landmines."

One of the ways that Theranos was exceptional and I worried about at the time as a danger sign was its reliance on big-name board members and investors who had very little experience with blitzscaling or even technology investing.'

In the end, however, even experienced board members and investors do not control whether entrepreneurs act ethically and honestly, although it is their fiduciary responsibility to hold the entrepreneurs accountable if and when they do act improperly. Entrepreneurs themselves need to take responsibility for acting ethically.'

According to Federal prosecutors, Theranos behaved illegally. But even if its actions were legal, they would have been unethical and irresponsible. We believe that the responsibilities of a blitzscaler go beyond simply maximizing shareholder value while obeying the law; you are also responsible for how the actions of your business impact the larger society. Hopefully, this realization will be one of the lasting legacies of the Theranos story.'

'

This essay originally ran inFast Company.'

In this essay, I examine 4 of the core key criticisms of Theranos, and the lessons we can learn about responsible blitzscaling.'

ARTICLE: HOW MARISSA MAYER CREATED GOOGLE'S SCHOOL FOR YOUNG SUPERHEROES"

When people think about Google's greatest assets, they usually picture Search, Android, or Gmailmarket-leading products that hundreds of millions of people use every day. These are great products, but I believe that Google's most overlooked crown jewel is actually a management training program."

Of course, calling Google's Associate Product Manager (APM) program a training program is a little like calling the Sistine Chapel a ceiling mural. Since its inception, the program's 500 alumni have become some of the most important and accomplished folks in Silicon Valley, like Jess Lee and Bret Taylor. It's the high-tech industry's equivalent of Charles Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, the alma mater of the X-Men."

In this episode of Masters of Scale, I discuss how to build a team of superheroes with Google's own Charles Xavier (minus the wheelchair and bald pate), Marissa Mayer. Marissa tells her own origin story, including how she intended to delete Google's recruiting email, and only opened the missive that would change her life because her fingers slipped. After accidentally becoming Google's first Product Manager, she built the APM program to train talented youngsters, and in the process, changed how Google works."

We then discuss Marissa's controversial tenure as Yahoo's CEO, and how the company's prescient (and enormously valuable) investment in Alibaba gave Yahoo the resources to re-invent itself, but eventually became so valuable that tax considerations essentially forced the company to liquidate itself."

You'll also hear about how Marissa decided to work at Google (in part, because she felt unprepared for the job), and how she ended up designating a Red Tape Machete to blow up ossified processes at Yahoo. This episode features a cameo from Karen Kirkland, the leader of the Nickelodeon Writing Program, whose alumni have gone on to work on shows like Blackish, Modern Family, Silicon Valley, and even, appropriately enough, The Flash."

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What's your origin story? How are you helping your talented youngsters maximize their talent and transform your company?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

'

ARTICLE: BRINGING MOORE'S LAW TO SPACE "

Simply put, Moore's law states thatprocessor speeds, or overall processing power for computers, will double every two years. While there has been some debate about whether or not Moore's Law characterizes advancements we've seen in space technology, and many believe that Moore's Law in computation has slowed, what is not up for debate is the velocity at which space innovation has flourished in the past decade. "

Lead by SpaceX, we've seen great advancements in rocketengineering includingreusable rockets.In parallel, we've seen continuous updates to modern sensor technology, communications technology, and compute technology.So too have we achieved critical advancements in space. Applying Moore's Law to space means that not only will launching rockets and satellites into space become cheaper and more frequent, but also that we will soon be able to launch a whole new set of modern satellites with advanced technology, launch them more often, and launch them into low-earth orbit."

Apollo Fusion is building the in-space propulsion system to deploy the next generation of satellites into space. Apollo Fusions mission is to help enable the second space race with a new satellite propulsion system that delivers 3x more total impulse per kg (or per volume) than existing electric propulsion systems on the market. I am thrilled to have invested in the company and to have joined the board.'

Taken together, the implications here are enormous:In the future, we will be able to frequently and inexpensively launch new satellites for everything from weather to traffic, to natural disasters, to communications.This amplification can have dramatic impact on everything from transportation and shipping, to agriculture and urban planning.'

Their first product, the Apollo Constellation Engine (ACE) is an electric propulsion system with best-in-class performance at a fraction of the size. ACE is a smaller, lighter, more efficient electric propulsion system. Unique features make ACE up to 3x smaller and lighter per impulse than any other flight system. With major innovations in the cathode, flow system, magnetic lensing, magnetic circuit, thermal radiation, and propellant, ACE offers revolutionary performance, verified by The Aerospace Corporation a widely respected independent testing lab.'

As an investor, I'm always looking for the best early stage teams who have unfair advantages in the interesting sectors in which they are building their companies. And if you are going to make a bet on kick-starting the next space race of satellites, this is the team to bet on. Apollo Fusion is led by two rocket scientists, co-founders Mike Cassidy and Ben Longmier. Mikeis a serial entrepreneur of four successful startups and former Vice President at Google as leader of Project Loon, ahigh-altitude balloon telecommunications product. He has two degrees in Aerospace Engineering from MIT.And Ben is a former professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Michigan and founder of an aerospace company which was acquired by Apple. Mike and Ben have recruited a team of domain experts in applied physics, plasma physics, and propellants, in addition to aerospace, electrical, mechanical, software, and nuclear engineering. In fact, the Apollo Fusion team has more than 100 years worth ofHall thruster experience."

I am excited to be a part of the Apollo journey to deploy the next generation of satellites into space.'

'

ARTICLE: KEEPING THE HUMAN IN THE HUMAN CLOUD'

If software is eating the world, it's using the marketplace model as the fresh cracked pepper to flavor its meal.Services from Uber to Amazon's Mechanical Turk promise to layer clean, systematic APIs on top of messy human interactions for greater efficiency.Yet while economics papers might model human beings as Homo Economicusahyper-rational utility maximzerin the real world, the operative half of thehuman cloud is thehuman.TaskRabbit CEO Stacy Brown-Philpot used the human side of the equation to transform the company's human cloud from a commodity into a community, boosting the business along the way."

In this week's episode ofMasters of Scale, Stacy explains how TaskRabbit's original model of competitive bidding while theoretically efficient was actually killing the business.By treating Taskers (the people who carry out the gigs on TaskRabbit) as a community of learners rather than pool of homogeneous labor the company drastically improved revenue and satisfaction, for both Taskers and their customers."

You'll learn how Stacy's childhood in Detroit helped her appreciate both the power of community and the importance of giving people the chance to work, how Sheryl Sandberg helped launch Stacy down the path of organizing powerful communities, and how Stacy's time in India helped her become a better manager and leader."

You'll also hear Stacy tell the inside story of TaskRabbit's transformation, including how an avoidable mistake in team communication nearly derailed the shift to an objectively better business model.We'll be joined by special guest Whitney Johnson of Harvard Business School, who explains why it's important to help every member of your team become a learning machine, byDelashea Strawder and Detroit's Mosaic Youth Theater for a special musical performance, and by Tasker Davette See, who describes the most outrageous task she was ever hired to complete on the TaskRabbit platform."

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode.How can your business tap into the power of the human cloud especially its ability to learn?And what are some ways you can help turn competition into community?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

My conversation with @TaskRabbit CEO Stacy Brown-Philpot for the first episode in Season 3 of my @MastersofScale #podcast really got me thinking about the human micro-entrepreneur loop and how to amplify it. We must keep working to develop new ways to enable entrepreneurism, jobs, and career paths that lead to broad-based prosperity.'

ARTICLE: MICROSOFT AND GITHUB: A COMBINED LOVE OF EMPOWERING DEVELOPERS'

One of the most interesting things I've taken to heart in the wake of Microsoft's combination with LinkedIn is how strongly Microsoft is committed to supporting open source code, open source developers, and Linux."

Under Satya Nadella's leadership, Microsoft has re-invigorated itself with an exploratory, future-oriented, and developer-focused mindset. Part of that has included pursuing major open source projects like Visual Studio Code and Azure IoT Edge runtime."

Now, Microsoft has announced its plan to acquire the world's most popular software development platform, GitHub. In doing so, it's showing that its commitment to the open source community is a key part of its vision of building tools that can empower individuals and organizations alike to use technologies like the cloud, AI, and augmented reality more productively."

As a board member of Mozilla for more than decade, and at LinkedIn as well, where open source projects like Kafka helped modernize our platform, I saw how generative and efficient open source development could be. That's why I'm so excited about this announcement."

As much as developers have driven entrepreneurship and innovation in Silicon Valley and beyond over the last several decades, that is only going to increase moving forward. To fully capitalize on the opportunities presented by embedding computational power into an ever-widening range of products, services, and industries, the world needs more developers. And developers need tools and platforms that help them work together, learn new skills, and produce code more efficiently.'

For millions of developers around the globe, GitHub is the platform where they collaborate, innovate, and build the future on a daily basis. Since its founding in 2008, GitHub has done an incredible job making software development open and accessible. Its new relationship with

Microsoft will give GitHub the resources its needs to continue serving a growing global community of developers.'

I look forward to seeing the GitHub team use this opportunity to keep pursuing its vision for collaborative software development. In an increasingly digital world, empowering developers is key to boosting innovation and entrepreneurship and that's why it's crucial that open platforms like GitHub get all the resources they need to grow and thrive."

Excited to see GitHub combining with Microsoft as it continues to pursue its mission of empowering developers worldwide.'

ARTICLE: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP AT SCALE: 3 LESSONS FROM SHERYL SANDBERG'

Companies need different kinds of leadership at different stages. And theres a very specific kind of leadership needed in an organization thats changing fast so fast that the office you leave at night is different from the one you walk into the next morning. I believe to lead this kind of organization to scale, you have to be as skilled at breaking plans as you are at making them.'

Every day, there are new competitors, new threats, new opportunities. Theres no simple, straightforward set of marching orders. Its more like a dogfight. You and your team will be flying upside down and at an angle sometimes.'

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg knows as much about this kind of leadership as anyone I know. Shes one of those gifted leaders whos made daring decisions at every level of scale. She can run a team of 4 or 400 or 40,000. I wanted to talk to her about leading a company as it scales, because she is the archetype for this kind of leader. Youll frequently hear investors, like me, say to founders: We need to find you your Sheryl Sandberg.'

Sheryl understands the combination of foresight and flexibility it takes to succeed at scale the necessity of both making and breaking plans. Here are 3 lessons from Sandberg from our conversation on Masters of Scale. In each episode, we explore how companies grow from zero to a gazillion. You can subscribe on Apple podcasts or find all of the conversations here.'

The BIGGER Picture: Notice what Sheryl focuses on here. She isnt bothered by her team applauding her decision to step aside. Shes disturbed by the fact that no one told her the truth. She knows she needs everyones honest input to make frequent, fast decisions. And that kind of openness doesnt happen on its own. Leaders have to embrace truth-telling. Especially when they learn that they are the problem.'

The BIGGER Picture: Bright young founders, listen carefully: As you scale up, youll have to start swapping out generalists those jacks-of-all-trades on which small start-ups rely with specialists experienced executives who know how to lead massive teams. Ive seen companies swap upwards of a third of their managers in 18 months. In the early startup stage, you need all-rounders who love to get their hands dirty. Later on, you need polished managers who know how to delegate. Not everyone makes it through every company turn, and not everyone is destined to be a manager. Some people are best as individual contributors as an engineer, not as a VP of Engineering. The key to keeping a happy team as you scale is to give your employees a frame to understand whats going on.'

The BIGGER Picture: This willingness to acknowledge failure and embrace disagreement is a critical advantage in a fast-moving industry because it allows you to see mistakes earlier, so you can know what to tear down and what to build up. Thoughtful scale leaders thrive on disagreement because it gives them the information they need to test their ideas before they make and break plans. Indeed, they seek out colleagues who wont share their point of view. Employees may disagree passionately about a dramatic change of plans. What matters is how you have the debate and what happens afterwards.'

Hear the entire Masters of Scale episode with Sheryl Sandberg; it talks in detail about the theory: that in order to lead a fast-changing organization, you have to be as skilled at breaking plans as you are at making them.'

3 lessons from Sheryl Sandberg on the art and science of leadership at scale: 1. Great leaders create open communication cultures. 2. Hire for roles that never existed before. 3. Seek respectful disagreement (and embrace failure).'

ARTICLE: HOW TO SCALE A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE: 4 LESSONS FROM AIRBNS BRIANCHESKY"

Over the last 20 years, I've worked on or invested in many companies that scaled to 100 million users or more. And just about every entrepreneur I meet with has that ambition as they get started. But here's the thing: You don't start with 100 million users. You start with a few. And in many ways, the best way to begin is to stop thinking big, and start thinking small. Hand serve your customers. Win them over, one by one. And don't stop until you know exactly what they want."

That's what Brian Chesky did. As co-founder and CEO of Airbnb, Brian's early work was more akin to a traveling salesman. He went door-to-door, meeting Airbnb hosts in person, taking photographs of their space, and learning what they did and didn't like about his product."

Now this may sound inefficient if you're an entrepreneur with global ambitions. But I'd argue that painstaking, handcrafted labor is actually the foundation of Brian's success."

Today, Airbnb is valued at $31 billion. Eight years ago? A very different picture.'

"We have this website and maybe 50 people a day are visiting it and we're probably getting like 10 to 20 bookings a day," Brian says, reflecting on Airbnb's first year and a half.'

That was in 2008. Since then, he's learned a lot about winning over customers. Here are 4 lessons from Brian Chesky from our conversation on Masters of Scale. You can listen to the entire episode here, or subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or Google Play."

"It's really hard to get even 10 people to love anything, but it's not hard if you spend a ton of time with them. If I want to make something amazing, I just spend time with you. Early on, Joe Gebbia and I literally commuted to New York from Mountain View [to visit our Airbnb hosts in person]. We literally would knock on the doors of all of our hosts. We had their addresses and we say, "Knock knock. Hello. Hey, this is Brian, Joe, we're founders and we just want to meet you.

We'd find out 'Hey, I don't feel comfortable with the guest. I don't know who they are.' Well what if we had profiles? 'Great!' Well what do you want in your profile? 'Well I want a photo.' Great. What else? 'I want to know where they work, where they went to school.' OK."

So you add that stuff. And then you literally start designing touchpoint by touchpoint. The creation of the peer review system, customer support, all these things came fromwe didn't just meet our users, we lived with them. And I used to joke that when you bought an iPhone, Steve Jobs didn't come sleep on your couch. But I did."

I remember we met with a couple hosts. We walk up to the apartment and we went there to photograph the home. And we're like, 'I'll upload your photos to the website. Do you have any other feedback?' He comes back with a book, it's a binder, and he's got dozens of pages of notes. He ends up creating a product roadmap for us: 'We should have this, this, this, this and this.' And we're like, 'Oh my god this is our roadmap because he's the customer.' I think that always stuck in our mind: The roadmap often exists in the minds of the users you're designing things for.

"If you want to build something that's truly viral you have to create a total mindf**k experience that you tell everyone about. If I say, 'What can I do to make this [product] better?' you'll say something small. If I were to say, 'Reid, what would it take for me to design something that you would literally tell every single person you've ever encountered?' You start to ask these questions and it really helps you think through the problem.'

We basically took one part of our product and we extrapolated: what would a 5-star experience be? Then we went crazy. A 5-star experience is: You knock on the door, they open the door, they let you in. Great. That's not a big deal. You're not going to tell every friend about it. You might say, 'I used Airbnb. It worked.' So we thought, 'What would a 6-star experience be?'"

A 6-star experience: You knock on the door, the host opens and shows you around. On the table would be a welcome gift. It would be a bottle of wine, maybe some candy. You'd open the fridge. There's water. You go to the bathroom, there's toiletries. The whole thing is great. That's a 6-star experience. You'd say, 'Wow I love this more than a hotel. I'm definitely going to use Airbnb again. It worked. Better than I expected.'"

What's a 7-star experience? You knock on the door. The host opens. Get in. 'Welcome. Here's my full kitchen. I know you like surfing. There's a surfboard waiting for you. I've booked lessons for you. It's going to be an amazing experience. By the way here's my car. You can use my car. And I also want to surprise you. There's this best restaurant in the city of San Francisco. I got you a table there.' And you're like, 'Whoa. This is way beyond.'"

So what would a 10-star check in be? A 10-star check in would be The Beatles check in. In 1964. I'd get off the plane and there'd be 5,000 high school kids cheering my name with cars welcoming me to the country. I'd get to the front yard of your house and there'd be a press conference for me, and it would be just a mindf**k experience. So what would an 11-star experience be? I would show up at the airport and you'd be there with Elon Musk and you're saying: 'You're going to space.'"

The point of the the process is that maybe 9, 10, 11 are not feasible. But if you go through the crazy exercise, there's some sweet spot between "They showed up and they opened the door" and "I went to space." That's the sweet spot. You have to almost design the extreme to come backwards. Suddenly, doesn't knowing my preferences and having a surfboard in the house seem not crazy and reasonable? It's actually kind of crazy logistically, but this is the kind of stuff that creates great experience.

"We put up these flyers anonymously saying, 'Seeking a traveler. We'll photograph your trip to San Francisco if you let us follow you.' This guy Ricardo replied. He was from London. We sent a photographer around with him while he was just travelling in San Francisco. What we learned was his trip was awful. He'd show up, he'd go to Alcatraz by himself, put on the headset, and then he'd go to Bubba Gump Shrimp. He'd stay in a budget hotel. He'd go to a hotel bar by himself, sitting with a bunch of dudes at the bar but he doesn't talk to anyone because he was introverted.'

We call him back. We said, 'Ricardo, we want to create the perfect trip to San Francisco for you.' We fly him back. We had the team storyboard the perfect experience for Airbnb. We had a driver pick him up at the airport. We took him to the perfect Airbnb. He went to these dinner parties. We got him the best seats at restaurants. We took him on this midnight mystery bike tour."

I see him at the end of the trip. I say, 'How was your trip?' He says, 'It was amazing.' And then I walk away. He yells at me. 'Brian, one more thing.' He starts crying. He breaks down. He says, 'Thank you. This is the best trip I've ever had.' I was like, 'Oh my God. I guess it worked. It really moved him.'"

I don't think anyone ever tried to design an end-to-end experience for somebody like they're in a movie before and we did it. That became a blueprint. We said we are confident on an unscalable basis that we know how to create a trip that deeply moved somebodythat was better than anything they've ever experienced. The question is: Can we develop a technology that scales and do it 100 million times?"

This is the narrative of every movie you've ever seen: A main character starts in an ordinary world. They leave their ordinary world. They cross the threshold to a new, magical world where all these obstacles happen and they overcome something. They call it the hero's journey. We applied this to trips, built a small team, and we spent the last couple of years figuring out how to scale this. And this has led to what we have today which we call Airbnb Trips.

"I tell a lot of entrepreneurs who don't have traction, I miss those times. Yes, it's exciting to have traction, to have a company that has huge scale. But the biggest leaps you ever get are when you're small. Another way of saying it is: Your product changes less the bigger you get because there's more customers, more blowback, more systems, more legacy.'

The most innovative leaps you'll ever make, especially if you're a network, are going to be when you're really, really small. You can change the product entirely in a week. Try doing that at LinkedIn or Airbnb today. That would be a huge disaster. So I think taking advantage of that subscaledesigning the perfect experience, asking yourself what you can dois amazing.

'

Hear the entire Masters of Scale episode with Brian Chesky; it talks in detail about the theory: that in order to scale, you have to do things that dont scale at all.'

4 lessons on how to scale a magical experience from Airbns Brian Chesky: Lesson #1: Pay passionate attention to youruser Lesson #2: Design an 11-star experience Lesson #3: Create a magical experience and then figure out what part of that magical thing canscale Lesson # 4: Take advantage of the time before youscale"

ARTICLE: 5 STEPS TO FINDING YOUR NEXT BIG IDEA FROM SPANXS SARABLAKELY'

Theres a myth amongst entrepreneurs of the lightning strike the aha moment when an idea just comes to you. In reality, its rare to find a successful scale entrepreneur whose big idea landed on their lap. Its more likely they were already on the hunt.'

If you want to find your big business idea, you have to surround yourself with the human equivalent of a pack of bloodhounds. And when you find yourself on its trail, follow the scent relentlessly. And be ready to act when you think youve found it.'

I wanted to talk to Spanx founder Sara Blakely about my theory:'

Her story of spotting, pursuing, and realizing her big idea is as legendary as it is unlikely. She came up with the idea for Spanx at the age 26 by cutting the feet off a pair of pantyhose. With no background in fashion, fabrication, or business, she grew it to a billion-dollar company that reinvented underwear without ever taking outside investment.'

Her story is the perfect parable for any entrepreneur looking for their first or their next big idea. Here are 5 key steps from Blakely from our conversation on Masters of Scale. If youre not yet a listener, subscribe on Apple podcasts or find all of the episodes here.'

Different people have different ways of expressing how ideas came to them. Sara will tell you that she asked the universe, and the universe answered. I would interpret it a bit differently. Id say Sara kept asking the same set of interesting questions, starting with Is this my big idea? And one day, inevitably, the answer was going to be Yes.'

First, notice the words Sara used: This should exist. Those three words flicker like a neon flashing light over a truly big idea. Theyre your clue that youve stumbled on something with real potential.'

Sara had spent years scanning the horizon for that neon sign, and she was prepared to go for whatever idea presented itself. All the other women who had the same thought simply went to their party and back to work the next morning, leaving the neon sign This should exist behind them in the night.'

And this gets to the heart of a major misconception around entrepreneurship. There is a myth that big ideas drop out of the sky, land in your lap, and transform you into a billionaire the next day. This almost never happens.'

Yes, Sara did have a key moment of inspiration, in her bedroom getting ready for a party, and that matters. But you have to look at what happened before that moment. Sara had already oriented herself squarely in the direction of a big idea; shed been on the hunt for the last 10 years. Whatever kind of idea youre staking out, you have to be intentional about looking for it.'

Sara knows that she does her best thinking in the car. So she intentionally creates the time and space first thing every day to open herself up to new ideas. This may seem like an interesting bit of trivia. But its more important than it seems. As an entrepreneur, you have to put yourself in situations where YOUR great ideas are likely to strike.'

You cant scale an idea that only lives in your head. You have to act on it because thats the only way to find out if it has legs.'

And great entrepreneurs know: Not every idea is going to succeed. But every idea should be treated like it could. You can only know in retrospect which ideas go the distance. But even if your first idea doesnt take flight, it may land you at the doorstep of your next big idea.'

Spanx may have started as normal pantyhose with the feet cut off, but that isnt where it ended. The classic Spanx, which women by the millions now rely on, are the length and shape of bicycle shorts. They look great under pants and dresses, never creating seams or lines.'

You could compare them to old-fashioned corsets, except that Spanx are breathable, flexible, and invisible under clothes. Theyre architectural marvels. The waist lines have an incredible non-sticky grip that keeps them in place. The legs dont roll up or show through clothes. But none of this existed yet when Sara first had the idea. She saw a gap in the market, and started building toward it.'

Its so important for entrepreneurs and anyone with an outlier idea to remember that not everyone has the entrepreneurial mindset. Many people will tell you, Thats crazy. Thats risky. Youll never succeed. Lots of people have tried this and failed. What makes you different? Why dont you just take a nice safe 9-to-5 job?'

So if youre the kind of person who gets discouraged or bullied out of your idea, you might want to do what Sara did and keep it to yourself.'

But theres also a real advantage to feedback. I do my best thinking when Im around people who challenge me, who poke holes in my ideas, and who can tell me where the landmines are.'

Its not that Sara didnt have any input. She just figured out where to get the most useful input, from people who knew the ins and outs of the business. And she shielded herself from the kind of criticism that might have crippled her.'

Weve created a list of Lessons on Entrepreneurship, Growth, and Overcoming Obstacles From 5 Inspiring Female Leaders that you can begin applying to your own life today.'

Get the tactics here.'

5 steps to find your next big idea from Spanxs SaraBlakely: 1. Clearly define yourpurpose. 2. Always be on the hunt for your big idea. 3. Put yourself in situations where inspiration is most likely to strike. 4. Once you find your big idea, pursue it. 5. Find help in the right places.'

ARTICLE: BECOME A TRANSCENDENT LEADER'

In 2012, after LinkedIn went public and the size of our global workforce was growing rapidly, our CEO Jeff Weiner convinced Fred Kofman to join our team as Vice President of Leadership and Organizational Development.'

Jeff and Fred had been working together since the mid-2000s when Jeff was a senior executive at Yahoo and Fred was an MIT management professor turned consultant.'

At LinkedIn, Fred's job was to help our employees develop into transcendent leaders who integrate their own personal pursuit of meaning into LinkedIn's larger organizational mission to create economic opportunity for every individual in the world."

While business is often considered a domain where anything goes in pursuit of profits, Fred has long recognized that productive work is how we achieve our sense of self, how we organize our lives, and one of the many ways we attempt to achieve impact.'

For this, I call Fred the "high priest of capitalism" and consider him to be the most effective leadership coach I've worked with. He systematically studies how individuals derive a sense of purpose from work and how, consequently, corporations and other organizations should incorporate such values as benevolence, service, and even love into their missions. Because these values help foster the kind of purposeful commitment that leads to greater productivity, they're key components of long-term economic value creation.'

While Fred recently completed a very successful tour of duty at LinkedIn, the ideas and principles he developed and advocated for during his time here are now available in his new book, The Meaning Revolution: The Power of Transcendent Leadership.'

In Fred's estimation, "capitalism is the alchemical crucible in which humanity transforms its base instincts into gold." In this belief he echoes 18th century economist Adam Smith, who famously opined in The Wealth of Nations that even when a businessman intends only his own gain, he is led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.'

To succeed over the long term, companies must offer customers real value, and deliver real value to their employees, business partners, shareholders, and other stakeholders as well. Recognizing this concept of service that lies at the heart of capitalism, Fred views the workplace as a supremely humanized place where the pursuit of meaning and impact do more to determine a company's long-term success than key performance indicators and profit and loss statements."

In light of this dynamic, Fred emphasizes leadership over management, and paradoxically asserts that "a transcendent leader has no followers." Instead, "he or she must be self-effacing to let people connect directly to the mission and the values.

Here's how Fred put it at the Wisdom 2.0 Conference in 2015, describing Jeff Weiner's leadership style at LinkedIn: "There are a lot of leaders that I see as rowing a boat. They're bringing everyone along with them, and saying, 'Come follow me.' But the way I've seen Jeff and other great leaders do it, they'll go and get on a surfboard They don't say, 'Follow me.' They say, 'Come on this huge wave.'

In the former vision, everyone's literally in the same boat, doing only what their leader allows them to do. In the latter, everyone's on the same wave and moving in the same direction, but they also have the freedom to improvise and set their own course of action."

Note too that it's a "huge wave.

As I've explored in my podcast Masters of Scale and in my forthcoming book, Blitzscaling, companies that define their corporate missions in big, noble, and extremely ambitious terms tend to be the ones that grow fastest, execute most consistently, and become the dominant players in their industries."

Microsoft wants to make people and organizations more productive. Google wants to organize all the world's information.Facebook wants to connect the world. LinkedIn wants to create economic opportunity for every individual in the world. Airbnb wants to help its customers belong anywhere."

When companies commit to service on a global scale, their ambitious and clearly defined missions help attract talented professionals seeking personal fulfillment through work that has real meaning and impact.'

Now, of course, we're in the midst of an ongoing dialogue where people are concerned that some tech companies have grown too big, too fast, without sufficiently assuming the obligations that come with their increasing importance in how society functions."

As Mark Zuckerberg showed in his recent two days of testimony before Congress, he clearly recognizes that the great power Facebook now possesses means it must also improve the ways in which it enhances and ensures the wellbeing of its billion-plus users. "We have a responsibility to not just build tools," Zuckerberg said, "But to make sure those tools are used for good.

The dialogue on exactly how to ensure the tech industry assumes responsibilities commensurate with its growing power is only just beginning. In times of great innovation and change, a natural instinct is to try to halt progress through regulation; to urge or even force companies and entrepreneurs to think smaller; to prevent the future by enshrining the past.'

Against this backdrop, the approach to business that Fred advocates for in The Meaning Revolution is especially relevant.'

While the tech industry must actively engage with elected officials, consumers, and other stakeholders to craft solutions that ensure its products and services have a net positive impact on the world, we must also try to preserve, as much as is practical, the free and open conditions that have made the tech industry so generative over the last several decades.'

To this end, the tech industry must exhibit high levels of transparency and integrity.And that's why our industry needs more transcendent leaders leaders who embody trust and integrity in a way that gives employees an inspiring example to model and also leaves space for them to make these values their own."

In the face of greater scrutiny, we also need entrepreneurs and companies who continue to pursue incredibly ambitious goals. While quests to connect the world or organize all the world's information can lead to unanticipated problems, they also create the greatest returns for society. As Fred suggests, such "immortality projects" are what create purpose and commitment, and purpose and commitment are what leads to great productivity.'

Fred's new book is his own effort to produce transformation at scale by sharing many of the ideas and techniques he developed while coaching LinkedIn's executives with a much broader audience."

And while a great leader has no followers, a great book does have readers. In the spirit of capitalism, The Meaning Revolution is now on sale at Amazon. I strongly encourage you to read this timely and profound book. Find inspiration in Fred's insights and actions, then seek out your own sense of purpose and great wave to surf."

For a quick and enlightening introduction to Fred's work and way of thinking, enjoy this slide show."

'

'

'

In Fred Kofman's new book THE MEANING REVOLUTION, he emphasizes leadership over management, and paradoxically asserts that "a transcendent leader has no followers." Instead, "he or she must be self-effacing to let people connect directly to the mission and the values." I strongly encourage you to read this timely and profound book.'

ARTICLE: BOOK REVIEW: MEASURE WHAT MATTERS'

For decades, John Doerr has been the leading evangelist for using objectives and key results (OKRs) to manage world-changing organizations. John has helped spread OKRs from Intel, where he learned the technique from the legendary Andy Grove, to organizations like Google and the Gates Foundation, to present-day startups like Zume (where robots and algorithms help deliver hot pizzas to your door in less than 5 minutes from your order). Now John has codified this system in his new book,Measure What Matters, which lays out how any leader can use OKRs to increase focus, boost performance, and improve employee engagement and retention.'

Measure What Mattersis really three different books that offer three different ways to learn. The first book is a classic management text, which lays out, in detail, a comprehensive system of management, the research that backs up its efficacy, and a broad set of tools and examples to let the reader implement its ideas. This book provides practical nuts-and-bolts lessons for managers and leaders.'

The second book is a collection of first-person experiences from real-world leaders and organizations about how they've used OKRs to achieve great results. You'll hear the inside scoop on how OKRs helped create Google Chrome and make YouTube a force in online video, along with nine other stories. Each of these different voices, offers different perspectives and inspiration, and you can choose among them to find your inspiration."

Finally, the third book is a love letter to some of the great legends of Silicon Valley, whose timeless lessons should be better known to today's founders and CEOs. In this book, John reminisces about his days at Intel, working with towering figures like Andy Grove and Bill Davidow, when they launched a desperate and company-changing effort to beat Motorola in the microchip business, and talks about the incredible impact that the great Bill Campbell had on organizations like Apple, Intuit, and Google."

Of course, it's hard for me to be completely impartial. Many of the ideas inMeasure What Mattersreinforce the concepts in my own books,The Startup of You,The Alliance, and the upcomingBlitzscaling. I was particularly pleased to learn that providing challenging jobs and growth opportunities for employees was one of the three core goals that Andy Grove set for Intel, along with market leadership in all its product categories and double the industry's normal profit margins. OKRs and alliances between managers and employees go hand-in-hand, allowing employees to understand how their work benefits the company, and helps them grow and achieve their career goals."

Whether you're a seasoned CEO or a first-time entrepreneur, you'll find valuable lessons, tools, and inspiration in the pages ofMeasure What Matters. I'm glad John invested the time to share these ideas with the world."

Whether you're a seasoned CEO or a first-time entrepreneur, you'll find valuable lessons, tools, and inspiration in the pages of Measure What Matters."

ARTICLE: THE RIGHT WAY TO BUILD AN ONLINE COMMUNITY: 3 RULES FROM INVESTOR AND FLICKR COFOUNDER CATERINAFAKE'

Back in 2004which is basically biblical times in Silicon ValleyFlickr was home to a tiny tribe of people who started sharing their photos online. Photo sharing begat the idea of followers. Followers begat activity feeds. Activity feeds begat hashtags. Hashtags begat #selfies. Its actually astonishing how many conventions of social media were begat by Flickr.'

And when Caterina Fake, co-founder of Flickr, looks back through that long series of begats and beholds her creation, what does she say?'

Now, I know a lot of founders who would love to take credit for social media. Even partial credit. Or accidental credit. But Caterina doesnt want any credit at all. What she sees in social media today is a corruption of the online communities she hoped to see blossoming across the web. To fix them, she says, you almost have to start over. Go back to the founding principles.'

And this doesnt apply only to what we call social media. There are many communities online: Marketplaces, crowd-funding platforms, content sites. And many of them are thriving, because their founders recognize, as Caterina does, that what youre creating is a civilization. As she likes to say: You are the framer, the giver of laws, the establisher of norms and the way you lead your first generation of users will shape how they lead the next generation and the next.'

Thats why I believe every founder of an online community has a responsibility to shape the culture from day one because the tone you set is the tone youre gonna keep.'

I wanted to talk to Caterina about this, because she played a key role in shaping so many iconic companies that set the standard for what an online community could be, including Flickr (as a co-founder) and Etsy and Kickstarter (as an angel investor and board member). Here are her 3 rules for building a community that can scale, drawn from our conversation on Masters of Scale. You can listen to the entire episode here, or subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or Google Play.'

The thing that really got me interested in the Internet was [as a teenager], I was really into Borges Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentinian writer, who in many ways predicted the internet. I found a group of scholars in Denmark who were Borges scholars online. And then I contacted them. And this was over BBSs, or WAIS I dont even remember how we were getting in touch with each other. But this was back pre-web, and we were having all of these fascinating conversations across the world. And this to me just was astonishing. I was, you know, this New Jersey kid in Reagan America, and a bit of an oddball interested in all these peculiar things in a football and cheerleading town.'

It was a revelation. It was amazing. All of these people who were intelligent, interesting, fascinating, and liked the same things that I did who didnt live in Morris County, New Jersey were suddenly people that I could be in touch with.'

Notice how Caterina cant even remember which tool she used for communication. To Caterina, the tool is an afterthought. What sticks out in her memory is the conversation, the connection she forged with her fellow users. And this deep-seated appreciation for these very human factors is one of the things that sets Caterina apart from so many other entrepreneurs and investors.'

A lot of founders especially the tech entrepreneurs tend to think of the tool they want to build, as opposed to the community. The primary paradigm in Silicon Valley tends to be: Here is the tool. Its a hammer, its a screwdriver. I give it to users to do a specific thing. And then the the secondary thing tends to be: Here is the interface. How can I modify it to make that behavior addictive? You can see this in the craze in Silicon Valley for A/B testing. (See, when the button is red and jiggles a little bit, you click on it a lot more!)'

But Caterina doesnt fight for clicks she fights to create that homey feeling she first experienced in the Borges message room. The connection between people. Thats what she hopes to scale. She has a passion for human interaction thats not exactly typical in Silicon Valley.'

In the very beginning of Flickr, each of us we were a team of five or six people were posting an average of 50 times a day in communication with our user base. It was a remarkable amount of communication directly with the users. Its very rare these days for there to be direct communication between companies and their user base. In fact, [user communication] is seen as a customer service problem you know, eating up customer service hours. Most companies actually try to prevent you from getting in touch with them.'

But Flickr was, as I said, an online community, and not social media. And all of [the founders] participated in it. Youre building a civilization, right? You are the framer. You are the framer of the Constitution in this world that you are building. You are, as I say, the Abraham in the series of begats. You are the person who everybody is taking the lead from. This is the case, especially with social media, that whatever values, whatever the mores are of the platform, of the community We say this, and we dont say that. We have a custom of greeting people here. all of this starts with you.'

If you do that, and you do it well, and you do it, it will carry through. And then 500 people will be behaving the same way. And then 5,000 people will be behaving that same way. And then eventually, 500,000 people will be behaving that same way.'

Its a very difficult thing to pull off, because, as you know, social practices are difficult to scale, right? But, if you build it in such a way, and you continue to participate in it, and you continue to manage it and make sure that those people whose behavior is outside the realm of what you are encouraging on your platform are not there then that is how you carry it through. We never stopped participating in it.'

Culture sticks. Its hard to appreciate just how much it sticks. The tone you set from day one from the first greeting is the tone you keep. Caterina understood this instinctively. And as counterintuitive as it may sound, she knew it was worth her time as a founder to get it right.'

Caterina not only understood the importance of cultivating a community, but also the complexity. Have no doubt: Community-building is complex, and its filled with traps. Its not sufficient to simply say hello to new users and send them on their merry way. Remember, youre building a civilization. You have to lead by example. But it will only take you so far. Sometimes you have to assert your values at the risk of losing users. And you may be surprised how quickly users test your values. Which brings us to'

A very interesting case came up very early on in Flickr, which is that a great number of the users were from the United Arab Emirates. And at the same time, Britney Spears was ascendant with her bare midriff outfits. These two things were incompatible. You know, the Muslim community did not like the bare midriff photographs that were all over Flickr.'

We had to make a decision. And we came down on the side of the bare midriff. We were like, The bare midriff is okay here. And that is the decision that we are going to make. And many of the community members went away.'

The biggest problem with todays social media platforms is that they dont know who they are. This is a very controversial position, because a lot of my colleagues in building these kinds of social platforms dont believe this. But I do.'

One of the things that Heather Champ who was the first community manager on Flickr says repeatedly is: What you tolerate is what you are. So, if you tolerate white supremacists on your platform, youre a platform for white supremacists. And you just have to accept that. And that unless you draw the lines, unless you say what is and is not acceptable on your platform, it just becomes a disaster. Because you want to be part of a community that share your values. And you dont share values with white supremacists.'

This bare midriff issue may sound trivial. In fact, decisions like these are the lifeblood of your community. It isnt that any one decision is the right decision. You can imagine other, flourishing communities coming down against the bare midriff. But you have to decide.'

By making these decisions or avoiding them youre creating a hospitable climate for certain types of behavior. So every founder of an online community must grapple with these questions daily. If youre not grappling with them, youre living with a false sense of neutrality. Youre actually allowing your most extreme users to make the decision for you. Because in these cases, a non-decision is also a decision.'

Listen to Caterina Fakes episode on Masters of Scale here.'

3 rules to build an online community the right way from Caterina Fake: 1. Think about the communitynot the toolyou want to build. 2. Shape the conversation from day one... and continue to engage after that. 3. Know who you are, who you're for, and what you stand for."

ARTICLE: HOW TO TURN FAILURE INTO SUCCESS: LESSONS FROM SLACKS STEWART BUTTERFIELD ON THE MASTERS OF SCALE PODCAST'

In Silicon Valley, entrepreneurs tend to celebrate a daring pivot. They see an opportunity. They actand they dont look back. Later on, they sound a bit like Caesar reporting to the Roman Senate: I came, I saw, I conquered.'

But the truth is a lot messier.'

Theres more to a pivot than a sharp left turn. First, theres the opportunity youre pivoting toward. Can you see it clearly enough to navigate toward it? Can you convince others to come along?'

Then you have to pivot away from your old idea. This can be incredibly difficult, because it involves humans. And humans dont tend to let go of old ideas easily. You risk blowback from your co-founders, your staff, your investors and your users.'

This will likely be the single greatest test of your leadership skills, because your credibility will come under scrutiny. Are you even believable anymore?'

Stewart Butterfield has pulled off two uncanny pivots. He has twice launched game companies, only to pivot toward game-changing communication platforms: first, as the co-founder of Flickr, the pioneer in photo-sharing; and second, as the co-founder and CEO of Slacka platform for group communication within teams that has taken off in Silicon Valley and beyond. Both companies, believe it or not, started as online video games.'

Here are 4 lessons on reinventing your business from Stewart Butterfields appearance on Masters of Scale. These lessons may help guide your decisions when things look bleak. To hear the entire episode and others, you can listen to the entire episode here, or subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or Art19.'

Stewarts first startup began as a game company. The game was failing. But from that failure sprung Flickr.'

We had this game interface. In the game, you had an inventory, you could pick up objects. We made that inventory a shoebox full of photos. And you could do interesting things, like drag photos around on to group conversations, and they would pop up on the other persons screen. You could annotate them in real time. And there was chatting in the game, so you could talk to the fellow playersthat became a cornerstone of Flickr.'

The game didnt work. But we had something. '

This was the beginning of Flickr, but it wasnt as simple as it might seem.'

That was the first idea for Flickr, which was actually really a terrible idea that had a lot of technological innovation, and so it wowed a lot of people, but it wasnt a very useful product. Maybe three months in, it was pretty obvious that Flickr had legs. So people started to use it, people were talking about it, it got a lot of good press.'

Almost all the photo sharing at that time was entirely centered around printing, and that was the idea of what people wanted to do with their general photographs. So that in one sense made it very easy. There was a lot of competition at the timethere was Snapfish, Shutterfly, there was Ofoto, which Kodak had bought, and Kodak had put a lot of muscle behind it.'

The difference maker? As it turns out, it was not just the technology. It was the understanding of a new type of media -- social media.'

None of [the competition] thought of the Internet, as far as I could tell, as a social medium in itself, and a worthwhile place to put photos. Gradually, over time, we layered on the photos having titles, and descriptions. People could comment on them. Joshua Schachter from Delicious convinced me that tagging photos would be a good idea, and so we added tags.'

And soon, we had a place where people could really play with them. I remember the very first tag for what just happenedsomeone posted a photo of a street lamp in the dark, and it was glowing in the mist. And they tagged it glow project, and they said, Hey, other people, why dont you upload things that are glowing and tag it with glow project?' And that was something that, as far as I could tell, had never happened on the Internet beforethat invitation for joint creative exploration based on tags."

It all happened so fast. We launched in February 2004, and by March 2005, the acquisition by Yahoo! had closed. Basically a year in market, and maybe 10-and-a-half months before we were in the middle of negotiations.'

Stewarts second startup launched with a multi-player game called Glitch. It was conceptually fascinating, but it was failing He couldnt have known it at the time, but shutting it down created the opportunity to launch Slack.'

Youll go through a period where you try a series of experiments: What if we did this?, What if we tried that?, Maybe its just missing this feature. '

But they just didnt work. The game was incredibly powerful for the small minority of people for whom it worked. So they spent 20 hours a week playing, and they were very committed, it was a super-tight community. But most people, like 97% percent who signed up, would be out of there within five minutes.'

The thing that killed it was just leaky bucketI mean, just like very classic, you can put it into Excel in five minutes, and see that this is not going to work.'

There was this night where I just lost faith. I just realized, OK, I had tried the 15 stack-ranked best ideas we could possibly come up with to turn this around, and I dont think the 16th was going to work if the first 15 didnt.'

Its never easy to shut a product or company down. And even when its the right business decision, you have to uphold the human side of the equation. Stewarts human-centered approach to shuttering Glitch served him well in the long term.'

We had built up this community, they were very enthusiastic. And every death of an online community is its own kind of tragedy, because those people think they will be able to maintain those relationships, but if the community is gone, they often arent.'

Thats really the hard part, and thats the part that is difficult for people to get overeven at the point where it was apparent that continuing wouldnt ever result in something that was going to be economically viable, or even sustainable.'

For an entrepreneur, sometimes the toughest moments are when the hard choices are not the obvious choices -- even if it is for the best.'

And that was a tough conversation with our board and our investors because they actually wanted us to keep going. It was a tough conversation with the other co-founders, who also wanted to keep going.'

We had those conversations, and then we called an all-hands. And I walk into the roomand it was an unusual all-hands; we hadnt announced it before, so there was already some nervousness in the room. And I stand up, and start, and I didnt even get to the first sentence and I was starting to cry. I locked eyes with one employee, who just three months ago had moved to Vancouver to come work with us.'

He had moved away from where his in-laws lived, and his in-laws helped take care of hisI think at the time 18-month-old, or 2-year-old daughterbought a house, and now I was telling him they didnt have a job any more.'

We made a website called Hire A Genius, and we put everyones LinkedIn up there, and everyones portfolio, and everyones photo. And we worked on writing reference letters and doing resume coaching. '

We ended up getting every single person a job. We were able to give customers a choice of their money back, or they could let us keep it, or we could donate it to a set number of charities. So we were able to do that in a way that was really kind of elegant, and built a lot of good will that would be useful for us later.'

Note: That employee who lost his job 3 months after moving? He ended up coming back to work with Stewart at Slack.'

Start-ups often pivot their way to success; its just not possible to predict every stumbling block or every opportunity. What matters most? Stewart argues, and I agree: Its your ability as a founder to tell the story and bring others along.'

[With Slack] We went out and started trying to convince other people to use it, which was way harder than we thought it was going to be.'

Social proof was a thing that we needed. So, we needed to be able to point to teams other than our own because, of course, we used our own product. So we had some friends who worked at Rdiothe music-streaming service, now defunct. And I was on the board of a company called Cozy, which is a landlord-tenant app, and I had a friend who had a company called Wantful, which is a gifting service. And we just went to their offices over and over again, and tried to figure out ways to explain why we thought it was valuable.'

They were friends, first of all, and they were very tech-forward, they were enthusiasts, and they would want to try new products. But what actually made it hard was, you have to get a whole group of people to change all at once; it wasnt just one person. '

The benefit of that, though, once youre able to break through, is once the group starts doing it, what was difficult about it becomes its benefit. Its very hard to get the group to change to anything else once they switch. So Slack was a really interesting product to scale in the early days because it had very, very little network effect between companies, but a huge binary, 100% or just nothing, inside of companies.'

We werent competing with anything else that was out there,other than the use of email, which is pretty much impossible to compete with, and whatever it was that people didwhether that was using a bug tracker, or a wiki, or Google Hangouts, or Skype. No one thought that they needed Slack.'

If there was one piece of advice I wish I could phone back and give to myself was just concentrate on that storytelling part, on the convincing people. Because if you cant do that, it doesnt matter how good the product is. It doesnt matter how good the idea was for the market, or what happens in the external factors if you dont have the people believing.'

'

Weve created a list of the 7 Game-Changing Tactics for Growth and Success from Netflix, AirBnb, Facebook, and Others that you can begin applying to your own life today. Get the tactics here.'

4 lessons on how to turn failure into success from Stewart Butterfield: 1. A great pivot almost always springs from failure. 2. Stack rank your best idea, dig in... and know when to quit. 3. Take responsibility for and care of your employees. 4. Storytelling may be the most potent tool in a pivot.'

ARTICLE: HOW TO SCALE IMPACT: LESSONS FROM STARBUCKS FOUNDER HOWARD SCHULTZ'

Every successful company scales more than just revenue. It scales your worldview. And I believe you can scale positive social impact along with your business. But only if youre as creative and cash-conscious about doing good as you are about your business itself.'

As the founder, former CEO, and now executive chairman of Starbucks, Howard Schultzs job is to ask: How do you scale the intimate experience of a neighborhood coffee shop across tens of thousands of locations worldwide? How do you keep a quarter million employees positive, consistent, and loyal? How do you ensure that 100 million weekly customers thats U.S. alone have delightful experiences?'

When your business scales massively, youre going to touch lives on many different levels. You impact employees, customers, and entire communities. Depending on your business, your choices can impact their mood, the quality of their interactions, their outlook on their own future. You have the opportunity to shape the world, for better or for worse.'

Here are 3 key lessons about balancing business and social good, drawn from my conversation with Howard on Masters of Scale. You can listen to the entire episode here, or subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher or Art19.'

Howard wants to balance profit with conscience as if too much profit will strain his conscience and vice versa. And theres some truth to that but its not the whole truth. Profit and conscience are neither enemies nor friends theyre frenemies. You have to be creative about how you bring the two together. Howard didnt put benefits ahead of profits. But he didnt put profits first either. He started tackling both problems simultaneously.'

Notice how Howard didnt say I want to invest in our people because its the right thing to do or I want to invest in our people because no one invested in my father.'

To promote social good as a founder, you have to think creatively about how it will help your business. You have to frame benefits and social impact as a means to an end. And you may have to do it in a way that no one has ever thought of before. The social good may be touchy-feely, but the business results should be undeniable. If you require yourself to adhere to that level of discipline, your impact can scale.'

Howard is a master at this. He honed his abilities through years of tough conversations with Starbucks investors. As Howard connected the dots between employee good vibes and shareholder returns, his investors might be forgiven for questioning his logic. But this gets back to Howards hypothesis. He just didnt see his business the same way other people did.'

Innovation, to Howard, doesnt just mean the latest frappuccino flavor. It means new programs for employees that make them happier, more engaged, and more loyal like covering college tuition for all employees, including part-timers. You might start with health insurance, or equity. You might add free meals or an office ping pong table. But if you want to remain competitive over time, you have to stay attuned to deep foundational employee needs as they evolve. Especially as they evolve.'

As companies reach the kind of massive scale that Starbucks achieved, they inevitably face a new set of challenges. Those twin questions: How do I do good? and the How do I do good business? become more complicated as your opportunities and your responsibilities grow massive.'

How do you keep what Howard calls their entrepreneurial DNA? How do you keep a human focus? How do you prevent customers from becoming revenue and employees from becoming headcount?'

This tension is at the heart of every great scale company. And this is the perspective Howard brings as he enters new territory. He asks what innovation he can bring to the market, and what innovation can he bring to the employees.'

But when it comes to thinking about people broadly, all businesses could stand to learn a lesson here. When we build something that could take over the world the way Starbucks did, theres an opportunity to ask: What do we want to stand for? What impact can we have? How can we make peoples lives the whole world, really better? And how can we do that in a way that strengthens our business?'

The key to Starbucks success? Howards years of focusing on employee happiness and asking, "What can we do from a people perspective?" This is a question that all businesses could ask themselves more often.'

Weve created a list of the 7 Game-Changing Tactics for Growth and Success from Netflix, AirBnb, Facebook, and Others that you can begin applying to your own life today. Get the tactics here.'

3 lessons on how to scale impact from Howard Schultz: 1. It's not all about profit. 2. The smartest investment is your team. 3. Don't underestimate the power of human interaction."

ARTICLE: WHAT AN AMAZON EXPLORER CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT FINDING YOUR BIG IDEA'

Think it's hard to find a big idea? Imagine trying to find a mythical boiling river deep in the Amazon rainforest. That's precisely what geothermal scientist Andres Ruzo did in 2010, when he set out to find Shanay-timpishka, which means "boiled with the heat of the Sun. That quest may sound quixotic, but it's no more more far-fetched than a 26-year-old door-to-door fax machine saleswoman bootstrapping a multi-billion dollar business that landed her on the Oprah Winfrey Show.'

In this week's episode of Masters of Scale, you'll hear from Andres, as well as that former fax machine saleswoman, Sara Blakely, whose best-selling invention Spanx made it on to Oprah's

Favorite Things. Their stories show the special kind of strategy and perseverance it takes to find a big idea and that finding it is just the beginning."

Many scientists had heard the legend of the Boiling River. Many women had cut the feet off their pantyhose. But most of the people who have a big idea never take the next step. They don't act. Or they let the world talk them out of it. Andres and Sara took that next step (and the next, and the next), and then recruited others to help. For Andres, it was his wife, some cousins from Nicaragua and a friend from high school. For Sara, it was a factory owner who manufactured pantyhose, who initially turned her down and then changed his mind, telling her, Sara, I've decided to help make your crazy idea."

You'll learn some unique techniques for thinking of big ideas like Sara's habit of aimlessly driving through the streets of Atlanta, and my habit of thinking through potentially big ideas while trapped in boring conference presentations. You'll also hear from past guests like Linda Rottenberg, Brian Chesky, Mariam Naficy, Mark Zuckerberg, Nancy Lublin, Reed Hastings, Peter Thiel, Caterina Fake, Ev Williams, Sheryl Sandberg, Sam Altman, Payal Kadakia, Bill Gates, Mark Pincus, and John Elkann."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What's your big idea? What's something that should exist in the worldbut doesn't? And how can you take that next step and get others to help?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

What's your big idea? What's something that should exist in the worldbut doesn't?"

ARTICLE: HOW BEING VALUES-DRIVEN RATHER THAN PROFIT-DRIVEN HELPED HOWARD SCHULTZ MAKE STARBUCKS MORE PROFITABLE'

When you build and scale a massive business, you're going to have a massive impact on the world. So when should you start thinking about whether that impact is for good or for ill? For many companies, social responsibility is a nice-to-have that founders and CEOs only consider when the business is established and profitable. In contrast, the founder of one particular small, money-losing retailer decided that his first priority was to provide health insurance and stock options to his blue-collar, part-time workers. That founder was Howard Schultz, and that small, money-losing company is Starbucks."

In this week's episode of Masters of Scale, Howard Schultz joins me to talk about the challenge of achieving both financial success and social impact what Howard calls the fragile balance between profit and conscience. And it is a fragile balance. Profit and conscience are neither enemies nor friends theyre frenemies. You have to be creative about how you bring the two together. The core business has to support social impact, and the social impact must be designed to support the core business on business terms. Howard has repeatedly found creative ways for these frenemies to work together; Starbucks was the first American company to offer health insurance to all employees (Howard calls them Partners), even part-timers, and the first to to offer every worker the opportunity to earn a free college education. Howard will tell you that both have led to higher staff retention, happier partners and ultimately happier customers and greater profits."

You'll also hear about how another master of scale, Howard's friend Jack Ma of Alibaba, inspired the key change that transformed Starbucks' China business from a stagnant money-loser to a fast-growing profit center, and why Leila Janah of Samasource and LXMI believes that selling luxury goods is one of the best business models for doing good."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What kind of positive impact can your company have on the world that will also support your core business? How can your business, like Starbucks, change your employees' and customers' lives for the better?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

Starbucks is not profit driven. Starbucks is values driven, and as a result of those values, we have become very profitable. Howard Schultz, Starbucks'

ARTICLE: OPENAI AND AI FUTURES'

I recently had the pleasure of attending an OpenAI event, where a number of academics, government types, and entrepreneurs convened to discuss artificial intelligence.The questions ranged from the changing nature of work, to how AI can play into international relations, to transformation of industries, to what the state-of-the-art is.'

Obviously, artificial intelligence is a complex and extremely timely issue, one that inspires a wide range of opinions in people.'

In fact, I often describe people's opinions about AI as functioning like either a mirror or a Rorschach Test. In the case of a mirror, a speaker looks at the potential of AI as a reflection of themselves. What would I do if I had an AI? In the case of a Rorschach Test, a speaker looks at the potential of AI via how they think other people in the world work. What would they do if they had an AI?"

Reflections range from Star Trek universes where robots produce all material needs for all human life to the kind of dystopias Hollywood more commonly produces. Its an odd part of life that dystopias and fears sell much better than hopes; I myself tend to be quite optimistic about the future we can create.'

And this is part of why Ive been happy to support OpenAI since its founding. It contributes a critical element to the overall development of AI.'

For decades, universities sustained AI research. Now, simply amazing progress is coming from a set of key company labs everything from Alpha Zero to image recognition to language processing and more. Most of the researchers who work at these companies are great people not just smart, but also appropriatelyconcerned about the results of their work on society.Some of these folks I count as close friends, and their contributions to AI will continue to be crucial to the progress we as a society make in this realm.'

However, as great as these corporate labs and their leaders are, its essential to have counterbalancing institutions as well like OpenAI, which pairs the inherent liberty of academia with the resources enjoyed by corporate players.All organizations are inevitably beholden to their structure. Corporations, for example, focus on a revenue and profit line, a competitive position, and a strategic plan for growing their economic capabilities.'

Like corporations, OpenAI is at the forefront of AI research and has access to massive compute scale. But unlike corporations, OpenAI is a non-profit.Its mission puts humanity first rather than business goals. And its structure allows it to attract philanthropic support while also providing public accountability.'

Because OpenAI is independent from companies and their competition, it can focus on the best outcomes for humanity and society.For example, OpenAI can provide a set of tools for all companies and all countries. It can serve as an independent convener when companies in the industry need to discuss standards or safety issues. It can invest as much in learning, safety, and collaboration as it feels will help the development of great AI with no worries about revenue over cost models.'

In short, OpenAI focuses on AI for everyone, and for the world.'

Of course, it isnt just the non-profit structure and the mission that makes OpenAI so valuable. It is essential that it has attracted a set of great people who have decided that this is their mission.'

When I went to the OpenAI event, I already knew that the people who work there are great technologists on a mission. I already knew that they're focused on how to shape the technology to human benefit.What I learned is that they're also committed to getting many other voices into the conversation, to make these discussions as diverse and inclusive as possible. Attendees included the new minister of AI for Dubai (who is a friend), to academics, to intellectually dedicated investors."

OpenAI is not about open source development the technology needs to be developed and shaped for the right outcomes and safety. But it is about open benefit to humanity.And like all 501c3s, OpenAI is effectively owned by the public interest. In the same way that the Internet's creators provided a set of open standards and protocols that lots of people could use to develop upon it, OpenAI is giving the world open tools related to AI."

I fund OpenAI because its the key research and development organization outside of the dominant commercial platforms.Its similar to why I spent over a decade on the Mozilla board.'

A structure that blends public interest and philanthropy.A mission focused on AI for the entire human ecosystem.Excellent technologists.The unique technical base for general AI tools that are not beholden to any one major commercial platform.A commitment to be in conversation with the world. And that's why I'm increasing my support for OpenAI, because its unique capabilities can also move the entire AI field forwards, both directly and indirectly."

As technologists devoted to improving the world, we want to anticipate trends before they happen.Then we want to help shape them for the best impact on humanity.Sometimes that consists of briefing the public and policymakers some of which happened at this OpenAI event.Sometimes that consists of creating a key technology safety protocol.OpenAI has the ability to help AI move forward in ways that ultimately benefit all humanity. Like another non-profit I support, the Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence Fund, it functions as a strong role model for how technologists and the tech industry should engage as they pioneer the future of society.'

OpenAI has the ability to help AI move forward in ways that ultimately benefit all humanity.'

ARTICLE: THE PRICE THAT BLEEDS YOUR BUSINESS, MAY SAVE YOUR BUSINESS.'

Payal Kadakia thought of everything when she launched Classtivity, the precursor to the fitness subscription service ClassPass. She and her team spent 18 months developing an OpenTable for classes, building thousands of partner relationships and a beautiful website. Every time a customer booked a class, Classtivity would make money. But 90 days after launch, Classtivity was only booking about 10 classes per month.'

Several pivots later, they started offering a free month of classes. This offer was so popular that customers started trying to cheat the system, signing up for multiple months under different email addresses. This was her Eureka moment. She transitioned to a subscription service, renamed the company ClassPass, and blitzscaled the business in cities nationwide.'

Payals story with ClassPass is the backdrop for this weeks episode of Masters of Scale, How to Price a Product to Scale, and its a perfect (though wonderfully complex) case study. The free model they landed on couldnt scale indefinitely. But it was essential to their growth. Its why I believe the price that bleeds your business, may save your business. MBAs will tell you to figure out your unit economics before you scale. But in Silicon Valley, you scale first, and figure out your unit economics later.'

And when you eventually have to raise prices, as ClassPass did, we have some suggestions on navigating the crisis of angry customers, who will inevitably tweet their ire.'

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. How did you price your product or service to attract a critical mass of customers? How did you change the price of your product or service to avoid going bankrupt?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

'

ARTICLE: DON'T BE A UNICORN. BE A PHOENIX."

Much of what I've been thinking and talking about in recent years focuses on scaling up quickly. But this week on Masters of Scale, I'm focused on a very different topic how to reinvent a company so it remains relevant decades or even centuries after founding. Forget being a unicorn, and be a Phoenix instead the rarest of companies that lasts 100+ years by rising and falling and rising again."

To learn to be a Phoenix, you have to look outside of Silicon Valley. So I talked to my friend John Elkann, who joined the board of his family's company (at his grandfather's request) when he was a 21-year-old engineering student. You may have heard of this company; it's called Fiat Chrysler. 21 certainly sounds young, but that's the same age that his grandfather, Gianni Agnelli, was when he joined the board at the request of his grandfather, Fiat founder Giovanni Agnelli."

John became vice chair of Fiat at 28, after the deaths of his grandfather and great-uncle. Maybe John didn't have to jump off a cliff and assemble a plane on the way down, but he did have to figure out how to fly an aging 747 with every warning light flashing an urgent red. John and the "truth-teller" he named as Fiat's CEO, Sergio Marchionne, managed to turn around the company and steer it through the 2008 financial crisis, including the eventual acquisition of Chrysler.'

In this week's episode, John shares what he's learned from Fiat's near-death experience and rebirth. You'll also hear from other Phoenixes who have re-invented themselves, like Robert Pasin, the CEO of Radio Flyer, whose grandfather (an Italian immigrant) introduced his iconic toy wagon in 1917. After cheap plastic wagons threatened the company's core business, Pasin found the essence of his company and leveraged the Mandela Effect to become the #1 brand in tricycles. Similarly, when Paulette Cole joined her family's firm, ABC Carpet & Home, she realized that she could turn a bargain hunter's carpet store into a high-end, award-winning retail experience."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What is the essence of what your company is about? Who in your life can you count on to be a truth-teller when things go wrong?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

'

ARTICLE: THE #DECENCYPLEDGE SHOULD INCLUDE INCLUSION'

One goal I have for 2018 and beyond is to increase my participation in ongoing efforts to make tech workplaces more diverse and inclusive. It's an urgent and critical problem; one only has to read Emily Chang's latest book,Brotopia,to get a deeper understanding what has unfortunately become the experience of so many women in tech."

Fortunately, there are many people focused on improving the ecosystem. Just this week, my friend Sheryl Sandberg announced that LeanIn is advocating for more men to mentor women, through the new campaign called#MentorHer, as a response to the possible backlash around the #metoo moment.'

One of the things I'm doing is adding to the#DecencyPledgeI advocated for last summer."

The #DecencyPledge was a response to news media reports of sexual harassment in the venture capital industry. My goal was to inspire the venture capital industry and other Silicon Valley professionals to take more conscious and deliberate steps in recognizing and combating sexual harassment in our industry.'

Instead of merely acknowledging that sexual harassment is a problem, or worse, expressing indifference or even skepticism about it, I suggested that professionals in our industry should report instances of sexual harassment when they witness them, and importantly, refuse to do business with individuals who engage in it. I also encouraged people to publicly commit to these actions, via the #DecencyPledge hashtag.'

Recently, all the partners and investors at Greylock completed an unconscious bias workshop. We did so in an effort to help reduce the gender inequity in our industry and learn more about how to actively combat environments conducive to harassment.'

Reflecting on the training, I realized something about the original Decency Pledge.'

While it originated as a response to sexual harassment between VCs and founders, its scope should be broader. As we work to make our industry more equitable, more ethical, and more productive, the Decency Pledge should incorporate a proactive commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, too.'

As investors and as board members, general partners at venture capital firms can play a pivotal role in making diversity and inclusiveness a more actionable part of the discourse that goes on in Silicon Valley, when start-ups are in the earliest days of defining their cultures and scale-ups are hiring en masse in periods of dynamic growth.'

General partners who commit to the Decency Pledge should have a proactive conversation with every company in their portfolio about how to create inclusive cultures, ask them what actions they are taking, and help them find the right resources as needed. As just one example, at Greylock, we committed to discussing anti-harassment and discrimination policies with our portfolio companies at the board level. If a company in our portfolio does not already have a policy in place, we are helping them create one, as well as connecting the CEOs with industry professionals who can help with education and roll out strategies. If you are a company founder and need to put an anti-harassment and discrimination policy in place, you are welcome to usethis templateto get started. In addition, GPs across the industry should encourage hiring managers in their portfolio companies to participate in unconscious bias trainings, so they can incorporate best practices for how to avoid biases when hiring, compensating, and promoting employees.'

And of course, GPs who take the Decency Pledge should work fast to eliminate unconscious bias in their own firms as well. While it will take time to achieve diversity across our industry, it's crucial that we continue to work toward making investing teams more diverse and inclusive by proactively seeking out and interviewing potential candidates from under-represented groups."

When I introduced the Decency Pledge last summer, many people in our industry embraced it. But some people said it was unnecessary: Why should people proactively pledge just to do what any ethical, decent person should do naturally? Others said it was insufficient, just a blog post that didn't go far enough."

Such feedback was absolutely correct. The Decency Pledge is a first step and that's it. It must be followed with ongoing action. The Decency Pledge was and is an attempt at collective action, to give those in our industry who do want to create a more diverse, inclusive, and safer work culture a way to rally around a common cause."

My hope is that if we work together collectively and intentionally, we will continue to improve ethics and behavior in our industry, and make it clear that there is both zero tolerance here for explicit ethical breaches like sexual harassment, and also an ongoing proactive effort to cultivate diversity and inclusiveness.'

In this respect, the Decency Pledge is about taking a public stand and making ourselves accountable. That's always a good first step toward broader action and change."

In 2017, we saw a shift in how sexual harassment incidents are publicly perceived. Obviously, the problem remains pervasive. And individuals who come forward with credible allegations against powerful bosses or colleagues are still too often dismissed out of hand, or, even worse, subjected to retribution and more harassment.'

But 2017 also provided reason for hope. As each new sexual misconduct story broke in the news media, more people who'd been targets of harassment felt empowered to share their own stories and words of support. Companies began to take significant actions against perpetrators."

What started as a few brave women speaking up and demanding justice grew into a movement with enough voices to begin to shift cultural norms. Suddenly, it was not quite as easy as it had once been to ignore, excuse, or deny instances of sexual harassment. People were taking a public stand, showing their commitment to holding perpetrators accountable and demanding new standards of behavior in workplaces.'

That's what collective action can accomplish, and that's what we need more of in 2018 and beyond, as we in Silicon Valley work to improve our culture."

In Silicon Valley, we talk a lot about iteration, feedback loops, and continuous improvement in our products. These are the values and tactics that help us make products that can "change the world" and we should apply them to our behavior and practices too. That's why I think it's important to publicly declare my values through mechanisms like the Decency Pledge. That's why I welcome feedback on such efforts, even if it's critical. It's the give-and-take of this ongoing dialogue that creates growth and improvement.'

Taking a public stand to affirm your commitment to creating safer, more diverse, and more inclusive workplaces won't eliminate sexual harassment, or end unconscious bias, or magically help companies achieve gender parity and recruit more diverse workforces. But it is an important first step in defining what we believe, who we want to be, and what we are iterating toward on our journey to a more equitable future."

'

ARTICLE: HOW LOVE LETS YOU SCALE WITH Y COMBINATOR'S SAM ALTMAN"

The startup world has its own unique vocabulary, filled with acronyms, slang, and colorful phrases. An uninitiated listener would be understandably confused by a founder enthusiastically exclaiming, We're crushing it! Our lower CAC proves that the dogs are eating the dog food!* But the core prerequisite for scaling a new company is a common, simple, and universal word: Love."

Building products people love is at the heart of the philosophy that Sam Altman advocates at the startup accelerator Y Combinator. Since 2005, YC has worked with nearly 1,600 startups, including Airbnb, Dropbox and many more.'

In this week's episode of Masters of Scale, Sam explains why it's so important to make something that's loved, even if by only a small group of people. In fact, it's better to have 100 people who love you than 1 million who just like you. You'll hear why Sam believes that there are two kinds of blitzscalinghard and easyand how love is the key to making it onto that easier path. You'll also learn why, paradoxically, love makes it easier to start a hard company (like Boom, a YC company that is making a supersonic airliner), and harder to start an easy company (like a dating app)."

Along the way, Sam explains how he ended up fighting an imaginary enemy with an actual antique sword from the Bronze Age while interviewing an entrepreneur, and reveals the one possession of Jeff Bezos that Sam really wishes he had.'

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What are the products you love so much that you tell other people about them? How did you find your first group of passionate, devoted users?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

'

* Silicon Valley jargon translator: '

You need more than your customers attention. You need their unflagging devotion. Sam Altman & I discuss why love is so important to scaling your startup.'

ARTICLE: HOW TO BUILD A COMMUNITY THAT THRIVES WITH ENTREPRENEUR/INVESTOR CATERINA FAKE (ETSY, KICKSTARTER, FLICKR)'

These days, when you talk about your communities, you're less likely to be referring to a small town like Our Town's Grover's Corners, than you are to your friends on Facebook, or an Instagram group chat. Online communities have simply become communities. Yet while these new communities are central to our lives, we're still figuring out how to establish and enforce norms to keep them healthy and welcoming. This week's guest, Caterina Fake, has probably thought more about and had more impact on how these (online) communities develop than anyone else in the world."

As a founder or early stage investor in companies like Etsy, Kickstarter, Stack Overflow, and Flickr Caterina forged a clear view on the practices that allow communities to thrive. Her early experiences at Flickr which introduced many now-standard conventions, like followers, feeds, and tagging combined with her years as an angel investor and board member imprinted on her the importance of shaping the culture of a community from Day One. And that means making clear decisions about what behavior you do and do not tolerate, whether that's Britney Spears' bare midriff (which actually drove away many of Flickr's early users), or white supremacists."

You'll hear Caterina's controversial take on where today's social media went wrong, and also what she saw in Etsy that convinced her to invest (admittedly, I dismissed the company at the time, thinking it could never become a big business. Oops!) You'll also hear from MIT Media Lab director Joi Ito, who turns to, of all things, fecal transplants as an inspiration for how to mitigate the effect of trolls in a community."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What communities are an important part of your life? How did their cultures get set during the very beginning? And what interventions could you perform to drown out bad culture with good?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

'

ARTICLE: IT TAKES A NETWORK'

In 2005, Eric Motley decided to leave his job at the White House, where he worked as Deputy Associate Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel. Like all departing White House staffers, Eric had an opportunity to pose for a photo with his boss, George W. Bush, to mark the end of his tenure.'

Typically, staffers pose for these photos with a spouse or parent. But various circumstances prompted Eric to break with tradition in a unique way. In the official photograph that documents Eric's time in the White House he'd been the Bush Administration's youngest appointee when he started in 2001 Eric stands alongside the President. But he's also flanked by four key mentors from his college years and his time at the White House."

Anyone who has read my book The Startup of You and its I^We philosophy, or how "an individual's power is raised exponentially with the help of a team,"will understand why Eric's photograph resonates with me. In a moment designed to commemorate individual achievement, Eric chose to recognize the role that others had played in his success.'

I know Eric from his work as the Executive Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the Aspen Institute. In my interactions with Eric it was readily apparent he possessed well-honed relationship-building skills and a high degree of what I call network literacy. Madison Park makes it clear that these are skills he's been cultivating his entire life."

In America, the idea of the self-made man is a major motif. But even with individuals who fit that description, relationships are often just as crucial as talent and character. Who we spend time with helps define who we are, what we value, and what opportunities we pursue.'

In Madison Park, Eric makes this fact clear. Born in 1972 to an unwed teenage mother, Eric grew up in modest circumstances in Madison Park, a small town near Montgomery, Alabama that was founded by freed slaves in 1880.'

"Looking back, I didn't simply 'grow up.' I was raised," Eric writes.'

This uplift was provided first and foremost by his grandparents George and Mossy Motley, who became his legal guardians, but also by community members and teachers.'

When he got low marks in reading in the first grade, members of his church brought books and magazines to his family's home to give him more material to practice on."

When Eric was in high school, his grandfather used to drive him to downtown Montgomery three nights a week for a YMCA youth development program. To ensure that they always had enough fuel for these trips, a neighbor used to surreptitiously siphon gas from his car into their car; Eric only learned about his generosity years later.'

Obviously, the people who took an interest in Eric saw something in his particular attributes and abilities that made them reach out to him. But what makes his story instructive is how receptive he was to the value of mentorship and relationship-building.'

Eric understood how experienced and influential elders could help him channel and amplify his abilities and interests, and sought out opportunities to make himself discoverable to such people.'

In high school, he participated in leadership and citizenship programs that ultimately earned him a trip to Washington, DC and a chance to meet Vice President Dick Cheney. At Samford University, he got involved in student government, and thus created more opportunities to connect with the school's president, Dr. Thomas Corts, who ended up becoming a key mentor to him."

In the pages of Madison Park, Eric frames different stages of his life not so much through the lens of his own accomplishments, or some grand master plan he'd concocted. Instead, he focuses primarily on relationships and the impact others had on him broadening his horizons, steering him toward new paths to follow."

People often feel strange about pursuing new connections or friendships with the explicit intention of strengthening their networks because they worry that the intentional aspect of this process feels manipulative. In reality, though, relationship-building is about finding mutual points of interest, building real trust, and taking the time to learn how each party can be more useful to the other. The goal is to create a more productive and mutually reciprocal relationship.'

In this context, professional and social platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook play an obvious role. While nothing can take the place of face-to-face interactions, digital tools like these can make it easier to strengthen and maintain relationships over time, especially when people begin to use them proactively rather than reactively.'

Still, many people continue to under-invest in developing their networks, and fail to appreciate how much impact relationships and alliances can have over the course of their careers.'

As a result, they don't look for ways to make strategic new connections, but instead hope for serendipity to strike. They don't fully utilize the network intelligence they could gather from their strongest allies by regularly seeking their counsel. They fail to act in ways that would make themselves more useful to their existing connections."

That's why it's so satisfying to see stories like Eric's, and why that photo of Eric, his mentors, and President George W. Bush is so instructive."

Often, "networking" is presented as a superficial activity making rote connections with strangers at conferences who might conceivably be useful in some way some day. But while this sort of transactional approach will certainly help you build a nice collection of business cards, it probably won't lead to the kind of meaningful alliances that can transform your life and career.'

What the photo of Eric and his mentors suggests is that they established a much more significant bond than that.'

Indeed, the fact that he valued their personal investment in him is just half of the story. The other half is that when he invited them to his photo event with the President, they all showed up. Clearly, it wasn't just that they'd been important to him. He'd been important to them too so much so that they wanted to be there to share in his moment of glory."

That sort of mutual respect and reciprocity is at the heart of all enduring alliances. And it vividly reinforces how Eric's relationship-oriented approach to life, which he captures so well in Madison Park, is a model that everyone can learn from."

Eric Motley of the Aspen Institute's new memoir, Madison Park, offers great examples of how building meaningful alliances can enrich your life and propel your career."

ARTICLE: RULES TO LIVE BY FOR INFINITE LEARNERS'

In working on the podcast Masters of Scale, Ive come to a perhaps surprising conclusion. There are no true masters of scale. I believe we are all, at best, what I call infinite learners people who not only enjoy learning, but need to be constantly learning on the job.'

This describes so many of the iconic entrepreneurs Ive met. Theyre set apart not by their mastery of any given field, but the speed at which they zip up a learning curve. And Infinite Learning is practically a job requirement for scale entrepreneurs because almost every scalable idea forces you to grapple with an emerging phenomenon. Everything around you is changing your business, your market, your team and you cant turn to any one expert for help because there are no permanent experts. Depending on your personality, you may find that exhilarating or terrifying.'

If you find it exhilarating, you are almost definitely an Infinite Learner. I consider myself one, and so does my guest for the last two Masters of Scale episodes, media and internet mogul Barry Diller. One of the themes that came up during the conversation was the need to learn by both reading and doing.'

To help you on your quest to learn by doing, the Masters of Scale team has put together a special treat a visual poster of rules to live by (and break) for infinite learners. We hope that these 20 rules will inspire you, provoke you, and keep you going on your own quest to become an infinite learner. You can download the poster below and make it your wallpaper, print a glossy version to keep above your desk, or silkscreen it on a t-shirt to share it with the world. You can also help us expand it.'

Once you become an infinite learner, it's the perfect time to listen to this week's Masters of Scale podcast, which focuses on how to learn to unlearn. You'll learn why Barry quit the entertainment business while at the pinnacle of success, and how his wife famed high fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg and her son Prince Alexander set Barry on the path to becoming the king of online dating. You'll also hear the story of how Barry promoted future Expedia and Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi from junior analyst to CFOeven though at the time Dara was a bit foggy on what a CFO did."

This week, we're going to do something a little different. I'd like you to read through the Rules for Infinite Learners and suggest rules we might have missed! Even better, tell me about the conversations you've had with others about these rules. Tag your post #mastersofscale so we can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale."

ARTICLE: HOW BEING AN "INFINITE LEARNER" HELPED BARRY DILLER BECOME A 4-TIME MASTER OF SCALE'

It's hard enough to be a Master of Scale; to earn that title, you have to have both the opportunity and skill to build a world-leading company or organization. Now imagine how difficult it is to be a 4-time Master of Scale in two domains that are radically different."

That's exactly what Barry Diller has done. In what is almost certainly a unique trifecta, Barry has been a Master of Scale in television (twice), the movies, and the Internet. Barry invented the TV movie and the mini-series, led Paramount from the worst major studio to the #1 movie studio seven years in a row, created the Fox television network, and then went from media mogul to internet mogul with IAC, which owns Expedia, Tinder, and many other major internet businesses. To put it another way, it's as if -- before founding Facebook -- Mark Zuckerberg had founded NBC and launched the Marvel superhero movie franchise!"

How did he do it? Barry Diller is a poster child for the power of being what I call an Infinite Learner. He's the type of person who has to always be learning. As he said, on this week's Masters of Scale podcast: If I'm not learning, I'm asleep. I relate. And I suspect many of you will too. If you, like many of the entrepreneurs I work with, feel this urgent need to constantly learn, invent, and tackle problems that haven't been solved yet, this episode is for you."

Barry's career illustrates how you can turn naivete into an asset, by learning everything about a particular topic, and then using that knowledge to question everything people believe about it. You'll hear how the three years he spent in the William Morris mail room rummaging through dusty, decades-old filing cabinets gave him the greatest education in the entertainment business. You'll learn why Barry said of taking over the Paramount movie studio, It wasn't until I saw how awful it was, how crazy and mismanaged, that I got excited! And he'll tell you in his own words why he thinks exhaustion is a key driver of creativity."

You'll also hear how Dropbox CEO Drew Houston used Amazon's search box to learn all about business, and why Alexa Christon of GE thinks the most important question in business is, Is there a better way? Barry and I even talk about why being infinite learners makes both of us bad employees."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. Do you consider yourself an infinite learner? What do you read or listen to (besides this podcast) to help you be an infinite learner? What is an example where learning everything about a topic helped you to question everything about it?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

The most successful scalers are infinite learners. Learn how Barry Diller used the power of naivete to become a TV, movie, and internet mogul. #mastersofsccale'

ARTICLE: HOW SLACK AND FLICKR FOUNDER STEWART BUTTERFIELD (TWICE) MASTERED THE ART OF THE PIVOT'

In the past decade, the term pivot has become an integral part of the Silicon Valley lexicon. Perhaps it isn't surprising that the place that gave birth to FailCon a conference to learn about failure would embrace the concept of if at first you don't succeed.... Yet most entrepreneurs think of pivoting too simplistically, buying into the popular press narrative of a single, bold decision."

Stewart Butterfield understands just how wrong that narrative can be. Stewart is quite possibly the grandmaster of the pivot, having turned two different failed video game companies into, respectively, Flickr (the first image-based social network, which presaged the success of Facebook, Instagram, and Snap) and Slack, the incredibly successful workplace messaging and collaboration service. These canonical pivots involved not only bold decisions, but also repeated failures, tearful goodbyes, and literal nausea. Fortunately, you don't have to go through Stewart's experience to benefit from the lessons he learned."

In this week's Masters of Scale podcast, Stewart tells the untold, messy story behind the pivots that created both Flickr and Slack. You'll learn how the idea of Flickr came to him while crouched over a hotel room toilet in New York, desperately chugging ginger ale to fortify himself to speak at a gaming convention in hopes of avoiding bankruptcy. You'll also hear how the pivot to Slack was even more traumatic involving 15 consecutive failed pivots over the course of 18 money-losing months, leading to a tearful meeting where he laid off nearly his entire team."

Yet from these painful ashes arose Flickr, one of the first Web 2.0 success stories, and Slack, one of the today's enterprise unicorns. The key lesson that Stewart shares? Not only do you need to pivot towards your new business, you also need to pivot away from your old business. Unless you find a way to provide clear decisions and graceful closure for your team and customers, you'll be torn between old and new. In the case of Flickr, Stewart had to do some old-school political horse-trading to get the votes to switch to a new business model, while in the case of Slack, he took the time to throw a final party for departing staff and the hard-core fans of its videogame, then find new jobs for all the laid-off team members. Pivoting away may not seem as sexy as pivoting towards a shiny new business, but it is a key foundation for later success."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. Have you ever pivoted your business? Did you find a way to find closure and pivot away from old business model? Or did you find yourself torn between old and new?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

Stewart Butterfield tells the untold, messy story behind the pivots that created Flickr and Slack. #MastersOfScale'

ARTICLE: THE SIDEWAYS PATH TO SCALE WITH DIANE GREENE OF VMWARE AND GOOGLE'

Some entrepreneurs start their journey with a detailed plan that they follow to the letter. Jeff Bezos, for example, always had a plan for how Amazon would leverage the infinite shelf space of the internet to become the everything store. Or consider that in 1980, when Studs Terkel asked a young bodybuilder named Arnold Schwarzenegger what he planned to do in his career, the young Austrian immigrant replied that he planned to leverage his bodybuilding success to become an actor and then go into politics. Most of us, however, have to keep revising our plans along the way. A scalable idea rarely sits squarely on the path ahead. Its always scurrying off to the left or the right. And if you cant get your team to adjust course quickly, it will slip out of sight. That's how Diane Greene started VMWare and laid the foundation for cloud computing."

In today's Masters of Scale podcast, Diane and I discuss how she, her husband Mendel, and his graduate students co-founded VMware. You'll hear how, on the one hand, Diane never thought about building a billion-dollar company, and how, on the other hand, when VMware had only 10 employees, she told her new office manager/COO V.J. Richey, V.J., this technology is going to run on every computer system in the world someday. That's precisely what happened, even though, at various points along the way, Diane had to struggle to find customers other than college science professors, and put up with the pity of entrepreneurs from hot companies like Pets.com and WebVan (They felt sorry for someone working in software."

You'll find out how those professors along with bankrupt Dot Bombs looking to save money and Linux developers who needed to check their email helped Diane grow VMware into one of the world's most important technology companies. You'll also learn how her experiences as a national champion sailor made her a better entrepreneur, how Bill Gates inadvertently helped convince Diane to start the company, and the one condition she gave Google before accepting its offer to run its Cloud business."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. What's a scalable idea that came at you sideways? What's a scalable idea you missed because you were too determined to keep forging straight ahead?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: DON'T JUST COMPETE. INVENT A NEW GAME AND MASTER IT."

I've known Peter Thiel since we were undergrads at Stanford, when the most common phrase either of us used in our conversations was How can you possibly believe that? Yet despite disagreeing on so many topics and in so many ways, we made a great team whether I was helping Peter build PayPal, or investing in Facebook together. That's because we agree on a small number of really big things. In this week's Masters of Scale podcast, Peter joined me to talk about one of those key areas of agreement: the importance of escaping your competition."

Peter grew up as a fierce competitor, but after competing his way to the top of his well-educated peer group and joining a white-shoe law firm, he discovered that he and his co-workers were miserable. That's when he realized that, in his exact words, Competition is for losers. The path to real success is not to compete, but to invent a new game, and then master it."

You'll learn the exact mathematical formula behind PayPal's success, which Peter still uses to make investing decisions. This is the same formula that allowed Peter to conclude that PayPal would be able to escape the competition (when the company still had only 24 users) also convinced us to invest in Facebook even though Mark Zuckerberg's pitch was lackluster. Fortunately, the service was amazing and Mark was clearly very smart."

You'll also hear some very different perspectives on escaping the competition, from the mindset that allows two-time Olympic gold medalist Natasha Hastings and her trainer Darryl Woodson to get ahead of her fellow sprinters, to the strategy that helps Wall Street banker-turned-baker Umber Ahmad separate her Mah-Ze-Dahr bakery from its more-famous artisanal rivals."

'

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this episode. How can you define your market so you're escaping the competition, rather than just beating them (like a loser)?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: UBER NEEDS TO TRANSITION FROM PIRATE TO NAVY'

Uber recently named Dara Khosrowshahi as its new CEO. I've known Dara for a number of years, and Uber has made an excellent choice in picking him. Dara is a steady, capable, well-respected executive, which will be important as he works to turn around Uber's woes, including multiple lawsuits, government investigations, a troubled culture, and most recently, simply astonishing board shenanigans."

Yet while Dara will be dealing with many flashy, well-publicized issues at Uber, these have largely masked a fundamental underlying problem. One of his biggest challenges (and greatest opportunities) will be steering Uber through one of the key but difficult transitions required when you try to blitzscale a company: The shift from Pirate to Navy.'

This essay explains the challenge facing Uber, the origins of the problem, and what he can do about it. As the Uber story continues to unfold, it will become one of the canonical examples of scaling, like the stories from my Masters of Scale podcast, and in my upcoming book on Blitzscaling. Whether Uber changes its approach will determine whether it becomes a positive example or a cautionary tale (or both).'

For decades, technology entrepreneurs have had an affinity for pirates. As with many of the classic tropes of the startup world, the link between startups and pirates was codified by the late Steve Jobs. When Jobs gathered together the Macintosh team for an offsite shortly after the release of the Lisa, he kicked off the proceedings by laying out three Sayings from Chairman Jobs as guiding principles for the project:'

Inspired by these words, the Macintosh team created a homemade pirate flag, complete with the classic skull and crossbones, and a rainbow-colored Apple logo decal as an eyepatch. Piracy became so associated with startups that when, in 1999, the cable network TNT released a movie about the heated rivalry between Steve Jobs and Apple, and Bill Gates and Microsoft, it was titled, Pirates of Silicon Valley.'

Entrepreneurs (and the press that covers them) have found the image of a swashbuckling pirate so appealing that they've allowed the popular conception of pirates to lead them into patterns of behavior that hurt, rather than help, their companies."

Much as with Silicon Valley's fondness for the term disruption, piracy is a sexy label which projects the wrong image of entrepreneurship, and promotes connotations that can lead entrepreneurs astray. It may sound cool to say that you're disrupting a market, but to the rest of the world, you sound like you're focused on destroying the old rather than creating the new. It may sound cool to say that you're a pirate, but to the rest of the world, you're essentially saying, I'm a no-good thief. Entrepreneurship is about creating new value for many, rather than destroying or stealing what's already there."

That's why to be truly successful, any startup that begins as a pirate has to eventually join the navy, as Steve Jobs did when he returned to Apple to become one of the greatest CEOs (and Admiral!) in the history of business."

One of the reasons the pirate label seems so appealing is that early-stage startups are a lot like pirates. They both lack formal processes, and are willing to question and even break rules to steal from incumbents (market share and booty respectively). This adaptability is critical in the early stages of building a great company. My favorite analogy for entrepreneurship is that it's like jumping off a cliff and building an airplane on the way down. Pirates don't convene a committee meaning to decide what to do when the ground is approachingthey act quickly and decisively, and are willing to take risks because they know that the default outcome is failure and the death of the company."

Startups are used to behaving like piratesstriking quickly, using surprise as a weapon, and taking on risks that established companies can't and won't. This is one of the main benefits of being small. We coined the word blitzscaling in our class at Stanford to describe the process of rapid growth from startup to scaleup. During the early stages of blitzscalingthe Family (1-9 employees) and Tribe (10-99 employees) stagesit's easier to take risks."

As Kris Kristofferson wrote and Janis Joplin (among others) sang, Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose.'

But if you succeed as a pirate, your stockpiles of treasure will grow. The territories you control will widen. You'll need more manpower to protect all that booty and patrol all that terrain. Once you move from the early stages of blitzscaling to the Village (100 - 999 employees), City (1,000 - 9,999 employees) and Nation (10,000+employees) stages, you'll lose the ability you enjoyed as a pirate to communicate and collaborate effectively on an ad hoc basis, and you'll have to trade in your Jolly Roger for the flag of legitimate, disciplined navy."

In other words, the impulsive Captain Jack Sparrow has to grow up and start acting more like the sober and responsible Captain Picard. This transition can be challenging; founders and early employees often resist changing their approach; after all, didn't it bring initial success? But failing to make the transition from pirate to navy can lead to disaster."

Before we go further, we need to spend at least a little time on dispelling some of the connotations of the word pirate. In print and on screen, pirates fall into two basic categories: Lovable rogues, and sociopathic criminals and thieves. The lovable rogue may question and break the laws of polite society, but always adheres to a personal code of ethics and tries not to harm others (think Captain Jack Sparrow). They are willing to break the rules, but remain moral an ethical pirate. In contrast, a criminal pirate behaves in a purely selfish manner, breaking rules and harming others whenever doing so brings material benefits.'

While startups and their founders may benefit from behaving like ethical pirates, they should never behave like sociopaths, thieves, or criminals. The key is to assess whether or not you're being an ethical pirate."

The broad question you should ask yourself is, "Am I a creator who is trying to improve the state of the world for everyone, or am I a thief who is just trying to grab things for myself?" In creating a company, entrepreneurs are creating something for themselves, but in order for them to become wealthy, their companies usually have to make a wide variety of consumers and businesses better off.'

Ethical pirates have ethics that most of their crew members share. The executives and employees following a founder or leader should ask themselves, are we on a mission to improve the world, or are we just in it for the booty? Do we truly care about the importance of diversity and inclusion for our team? Are we following the principles of The Alliance and creating mutually beneficial relationships with managers and employees? If you're working with an ethical pirate, you should feel proud of your shared values."

At PayPal, for example, we bent and broke some rules, but we did so because we believed we were working towards a better future for society at large. We felt that our actions were ethical because we believed that in the long run, we would convince the world to change its rules, and that the economy would be better off as a result. History demonstrates that we were right. The various parties that were upset by our piracyeBay, banks, regulatorsall see the value of PayPal today, and by changing the rules, we helped pave the way for other payment companies like Square and Stripe, which have improved the world even further.'

A present-day example of a field where there are both ethical and criminal pirates is the rapid development of cryptocurrencies like BitCoin, and the development of Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs) as a financing tool. The startups that are creating currencies and holding ICOs are operating in a grey area, and are likely breaking rules. Some of these startups are ethical pirates, who are working to change the rules for everyone. Others are simply thieves. Both types might make money in the short term if the market is hot enough, but only the ethical pirates will be able to build lasting businesses, and only the ethical pirates will have a positive impact on the world.'

This brings us to the situation facing Uber. The ride-sharing company, which at its last round of financing was the world's most valuable startup, has been in the news quite a bit for a number of serious issues."

Some of these issues are due to clearly unethical behavior, including internal problems such as the sexual harassment reported by former Uber engineer Susan Fowler, and various external attempts to subvert free competition, regulation, and the press, such as (allegedly) appropriating intellectual property from Waymo, developing software to prevent law enforcement and regulators from accessing the service, and then-executive Emil Michael suggesting that the company spend money to hire opposition researchers to intimidate journalists.'

This kind of behavior is unacceptable, regardless of the size or stage of the company undertaking it, and has rightly been widely condemned.'

Yet even if Uber had never engaged in the unethical behaviors outlined above, the company would still be facing real issues because of its historic reluctance to abandon the principles of piracy (even ethical piracy) despite its much greater size and scope.'

These structural and management issues haven't attracted nearly as much attention as Uber's potential unethical behavior, various lawsuits, and leak-intra-board conflict, but they represent a completely separate but similarly serious threat to Uber's long-term success."

Dara has a reputation for running a no-drama operation (a classic naval leader, in other words). But just as important is his experience in successfully growing Expedia into a profitable $20 Billion, 20,000 employee giant that has won praise as one of the best managed companies in its industry. Over his tenure as CEO, Expedia tripled its number of employees and more than quadrupled its gross bookings, demonstrating his ability to command a major enterprise through a period of significant growth. In other words, he is a successful Admiral, who has demonstrated the ability to manage a company's growth from a scale below that of Uber (which currently has 12,000 employees) to a scale above."

Most startups recognize the value to being small. Small means innovation, nimbleness, focus, and outcome as opposed to process, internal communications, and meetings. Successful entrepreneurs realize that they need to keep the positives of staying small, while building in the virtues of bigness.'

When an organization makes the transition from single pirate ship to a fleet under naval discipline, there are well-established techniques and approaches that can help make this transition smoother and more effective. A fleet isn't just a large collection of pirate ships. While the individual ships still have some freedom of action, captains are both individuals and part of a larger organization. You can't run a successful navy if what you really have is a set of pirate ships pretending to work together."

If you're building a global business, there are three key elements you need to put in place:"

Elements 1 and 2 involve a decentralized command structure that allows the individual captains in the fleet to operate with entrepreneurial vigor. Element 3 involves a centralized staff that can help the admiral coordinate the actions of the fleet for maximum impact.'

Uber actually did a good job with Elements 1 and 2. Uber's General Managers are like individual ship captains, and their ability to act independently helped Uber develop innovations like surge pricing (which was an independent experiment conducted in the Boston market). Where Uber failed was its inability to commit to Element 3 a unified executive team. When you have strong individual captains, and an admiral who can't or won't build a staff to help him or her actually manage the fleet, you end up with an uncoordinated group of pirates."

The failure to build a unified executive team is sadly common. Some entrepreneurs find it difficult to accept the increased structure and decreased freedom of a formal staff; many of these people started companies precisely because they disliked the feeling of working in a large organization. In his book on Uber, Wild Ride, Adam Lashinsky describes how Uber's founder and former CEO Travis Kalanick tried to navigate this shift:"

I ask if he likes running a big company. The way I do it, it doesnt feel big, he says, falling back on a favorite trope: that he approaches his day as a series of problems to be solved. He obviously thinks of himself as troubleshooter-in-chief as much as a CEO.'

Bigness clearly is scary. I would say you constantly want to make your company feel small, he says. You need to create mechanisms and cultural values so that you feel as small as possible. Thats how you stay innovative and fast. But how you do that at different sizes is different. Like when youre super small, you go fast by just tribal knowledge. But if you did tribal knowledge when youre super big it would be chaotic and youd actually go really slow. So you have to constantly find that line between order and chaos.'

Kalanick's words reveal a pirate's discomfort with running a large organization. Being a troubleshooter-in-chief might be a good fit for his personality, but diving into the details of individual problems is generally a poor use of a CEO's time."

The purpose of hiring a management team is to solve the organization's problems in a more scalable way. The CEO should be the hub, and the executive team the spokes that connect the CEO to the frontline managers and employees where the rubber hits the road. Kalanick was trying to be the hub and the spokes, rather than building up the organization's ability to get things done without his personal involvement. Another symptom of this dysfunction was Kalanick's habit of cancelling his executive staff meetings. Without spending time together, it is difficult for a management team to cohere, or to coordinate the many initiatives of the organization."

Kalanick is absolutely correct when he argues that staying small helps organizations stay innovative and fast, but staying small isn't always a possibility. Rather than avoiding getting big for as long as possible, it is better to steer into the process so that you can iterate the organizational structure multiple times as you scale. This means you make the transition over time, instead of making the shift in a single giant leap someday."

As you blitzscale, you have to build structure in order to have a functional organization. Even someone as smart as Larry Page learned this during the early days of Google. Page initially tried to run Google's entire engineering department without management by having all 400 employees report directly to Wayne Rosing. The failure of this experiment convinced him to allow Eric Schmidt to build a real organizational structure at Google."

Any given management structure is likely to be temporary; you can't run a Village (100 - 999 employees) the same way you run a Tribe (10 - 99 employees), and you can't run a City (1,000 -

9,999 employees) the same way you run a Village. But without a management structure that works for your current size, you won't make it to the next stage of blitzscaling."

Larry Greiner wrote about precisely this dynamic in Harvard Business Review in 1998:'

It appears that Kalanick's discomfort with Uber feeling big led to a dysfunctional organizational structure where he clung to his previous ways. Rather than a cohesive management team, Uber seemed to operate on a model that Susan Fowler described as a Game of Thrones political war with managers fighting for advancement:"

When Uber tried to transition from pirate to navy by hiring experienced executives like Jeff Jones from Target, those executives ended up resigning rather than changing the organization. During the first half of 2017 alone, Uber lost eight VPs or department heads.'

In contrast, companies like Facebook and Amazon, and leaders like Mark Zuckerberg and Jeff Bezos found ways to successfully recruit leadership from the outside, blending them with existing team members to change and strengthen the organization. Facebook promoted insiders like Chris Cox, but also brought in compatible outsiders like Sheryl Sandberg and Mike Schroepfer. Jeff Bezos' key lieutenants like Jeff Blackburn and Andy Jassy are Amazon lifers, but he also brought in key outsiders like Rick Dalzell from Walmart. These outside hires can help even at massive scale. When Microsoft acquired LinkedIn, it also brought in executives with different and valuable skills and experiences."

Uber can take heart from the example of Facebook, a former ethical pirate that overcame scandal and skepticism to become a respected and responsible Navy.'

Do you remember the early days of Facebook? Back then, Facebook wasn't one of the most valuable companies in the world, and Mark Zuckerberg wasn't viewed as one of the world's great CEOs. In fact, Mark faced criticism for many of his early actions, and the company had to live through significant turmoil, such as the user revolt over the introduction of Newsfeed, now the core of the service."

The reason Facebook is Facebook today is that the company made steady progress from pirate to navy. This is readily apparent in the transition from the motto, move fast and break things, to move fast with stable infrastructure. On the management side, Facebook continued to develop and hire navy captains like David Marcus. Mark has been able to balance being a hub for his captainshe literally sits with them and collaborates on a daily basiswhile still giving them the broad authority to operate independently that helps keep Facebook nimble and innovative.'

Both Mark and Facebook have grown a lot since those early days, and it is precisely many of those changes which allow Facebook to be so successful.'

When it comes to startups, Steve Jobs was rightit's good to be a pirate. But if you're a successful pirate, you have to become the navy."

First, and foremost, you have to be an ethical pirate, even if you're challenging norms and rules. Be a lovable rogue, not a criminal; not only is it the right thing to do, but it also makes going legitimate later on that much easier."

As your fleet of pirate ships and followers grows, you need to intentionally shape them into a disciplined navy. A fleet of ships requires strong captains AND a strong centralized staff that can coordinate and harness their entrepreneurial vigor. Navies can establish nations, whereas pirate fleets eventually collapse.'

Every successful founder and every successful organization need to go through these changes. But as Uber has discovered, Blitzscaling makes this change simultaneously harder (because of the speed at which it must happen) and more important (because of the risk inherent in investing in speed over efficiency).'

In Uber's case, even if the company had stringently adhered to the standards of ethical piracy, its failure to transition from pirate to navy would still have caused a host of major issues and challenges. Uber is a great example of blitzscaling in many respects: from its aggressive capital acquisition and deployment strategy, to its speed in entering different global markets and its willingness to challenge outmoded transportation regulations. Nevertheless, Uber has failed to do some of the key things that are a part of successful blitzscaling, like the transition from pirate to navy. Fortunately, it's not too late for Uber's pirate fleet to change its ways. Dara Khosrowshahi will absolutely need to fix the company's values and culture so that it acts like an ethical pirate, but he must also make fixing its organizational structure a top priority. No doubt these changes will be difficult, and require the reform or departure of many pirates, as well as the recruitment of many experienced officers from the outside. But there is no shortcut. Scaleups need to manage risks and coordinate numerous groups and initiatives. They need become a navy."

ARTICLE: AN UPDATE ON THE FIRST DISOBEDIENCE AWARD'

In April 2015, a mother in Flint, Michigan concerned about the city's seemingly tainted water supply contacted Marc Edwards, an engineering professor who had previously helped expose a similar issue in Washington DC."

While the initial tests Edwards made on samples the woman provided revealed high levels of lead in Flint's water, local officials and the EPA ignored his efforts to draw attention to this fact. But Edwards continued to investigate the issue, heading up a team of volunteer researchers and self-funding more research to help show how government officials were covering up the issue."

Later that year, a Flint, Michigan pediatrician named Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha tested lead levels in local children. In September 2015, she took the bold step of publicly releasing her findings before they'd been peer-reviewed in order to accelerate the process of holding local officials accountable."

Thanks to the efforts of these two individuals, the Flint water crisis eventually received national attention along with an admission from government officials that the crisis was real.'

In July 2017, the pair were honored with the MIT Media Las inaugural Disobedience Award, which was presented during the course of the Media Las Defiance event."

As the funder of the $250,000 prize, I was on-hand to honor Mr. Edwards and Dr. Hanna-Attisha and thank them for their commitment to truth and justice in the face of official attempts to hide the problem.'

When MIT Media Lab Director Joi Ito, my friend and long-time collaborator on a number of different projects, first raised the idea of a prize for disobedience, I was immediately intrigued. I've always appreciated prizes and the cultural leverage they create. They're an extremely effective way to shine light on the values we aspire to as a society, and on individuals who are putting those values into practice."

Joi's idea of honoring acts of principled and non-violent disobedience seemed both unique and highly useful. Throughout history, human progress often comes from speaking truth to power, in acts of defiance against entrenched interests and the status quo."

That's why it's so important to reinforce the idea that principled and non-violent disobedience is a core value that every healthy democracy should nurture and celebrate."

I also liked that a prize for disobedience could apply to both a wide range of domains and a wide range of tactics. Potential recipients included scientists, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, legislators, and others. A prizewinning action might take the form of an individual defying an established institutional protocol, or thousands of people marching in the streets, or something else entirely.'

Still, as excited as I was about Joi's idea, there were also plenty of questions."

Was it impractical to try to formally recognize something as mutable and undefined as disobedience? Would attempts to identify worthy recipients get mired in arguments about what qualifies as principled or not? Would our core message of recognizing the positive social impact of civil and non-violent disobedience be twisted or sensationalized?'

Instead of trying to error-proof the Disobedience Award in advance, we decided we would simply experiment. I'd provide the funding for an initial award. In conjunction with the MIT Media Lab, Joi would recruit a panel of multi-disciplinary judges to assess candidates. Eventually, a call for submissions would go out. And then we'd see what happened."

As soon as we publicized the call for submissions, entries started pouring in. Eventually, more than 7800 were submitted, from six continents. As the prize's funder, I didn't participate in choosing members of the selection committee, or in the committee's work of assessing entries. Because of the quality of entries that were arriving, Joi floated the idea of awarding smaller prizes to a limited number of finalists along with the overall winner. I agreed to fund those as well."

The selection committee included Joi; director of the Center for Civic Media at MIT, Ethan Zuckerman; reporter and analyst Farai Chideya; Harvard University chemist and geneticist, George Church; scholar, activist, and associate professor of Civic Media at MIT, Sasha Costanza-Chock; filmmaker Jesse Dylan; Stanford University statistics professor Jerome Friedman; senior lecturer in public policy at Harvard University, Marshall Ganz; hacker, author, and researcher, Andrew bunnie Huang; physician and international peace activist, Alaa Murabit; Executive Director of the Albert Einstein Institution, which promotes strategic non-violent action, Jamila Raqib; and geophysics professor and Vice President for Research at MIT, Maria Zuber.'

This multidisciplinary and highly accomplished judging panel put many hours into reviewing submissions and ended up identifying an inspiring range of individuals and groups advocating for positive, principled change.'

Along with our inaugural winners, Marc Edwards and Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the MIT Media Lab awarded three $10,000 honorable mention prizes to the following individuals and groups:'

Having all these people on stage at the same event confirmed what we'd hypothesized about the Disobedience Award. It is a powerful and flexible point of leverage that can shine light on a wide range of worthy causes and principled actions."

Amongst our winners and finalists, we had people who had risked their careers and livelihoods for their beliefs. We had people who had put themselves in professional and even physical jeopardy, who'd been ridiculed and harassed and arrested."

These are the dangers that anyone who sets out to challenge entrenched interests with unwelcome truths inevitably faces. And yet as our winners and finalists attest, the dangers that attend dissent are never enough to dissuade those who truly have the courage of their convictions.'

Such individuals know that standing up for what is right outweighs the sacrifices and penalties such actions may trigger. And we, as a society, are incredibly fortunate we have people like Marc Edwards, Mona Hanna-Attisha, James Hansen, the Water Protectors of Standing Rock, and the founders of Freedom University Georgia working on our behalf. Their courage, their passion, and their commitment to truth sets a standard we should all aspire to emulate.'

It was my great privilege to participate in honoring them. Inspired by their efforts, we have decided to make the Disobedience Award an annual event.'

Information about the 2018 nomination process will be available soon. To receive this information as soon as it becomes available, you can sign up here.'

'

ARTICLE: THE UNITED NATIONS: A NETWORK OF NETWORKS'

My keynote remarks at the UN General Assembly'sHigh-Level Event on Innovation and Technology - SDG Innovation."

'

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, Your Excellencies:'

Good morning. Its a great privilege to be here with you today.My name is Reid Hoffman. I'm the founder of LinkedIn and a partner at the venture capital firm, Greylock Partners."

We're here because we have a shared vision of a better future world. A world where poverty is reduced by half by 2030. Where agriculture grows more productive but also more sustainable. Where every child has access to quality education and every adult has productive employment."

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are both optimistic and achievable. We recognize we can only get to that better version of the world by 2030 with massive innovation. To succeed, we will need innovation that is both original and deployed at global scale.To achieve that vision, we need new technologies; new collaborative strategies between governments, NGOs, and the private sector; new methods of sharing and scaling what works.'

The question is: what is required in order to achieve these technologies and these strategies?'

The short answer is networks and entrepreneurship.'

Networks enable communication, collaboration, and coordination that in turn enable innovation.Great innovations always require a set of interlocking discoveries, such as these:'

Entrepreneurs find the right innovations from networks and build them into products and services with business models.These business models might be focused on economic profit, even as they deliver key new technologies that increase quality of life.Or these business models might just fund the global availability of products and services with minimal profits.'

So, lets start with networks.In a sense, the United Nations has the potential to be a great connector of networksa network that helps other networks connect.For networks to work, they require connection.Information and communication needs to flow.Specifically, the right information needs to get to the right people.At LinkedIn, we try to match job-seekers and companies with each other by using the network.In short, we connect talent with economic opportunities. '

Then, in addition to communication, the network needs to establish the ability to transact safely, reliably, and quickly.The task may be establishing a partnership; it may be selling a product or service; it may be financing a venture.So, the network needs to have a framework to evaluate and establish trust.'

The UN can work to establish networksnot just between the member statesbut also with the right businesses, the right NGOs, the right universities, and even the right technology inventors. These networks are key, because its network collaboration that generates the right innovations.'

So, why is entrepreneurship key?Many of the great inventions will come from new opportunities, new ideasespecially in response to challenges as great as those we face.Challenges which are exemplified by the Sustainable Development Goals.'

Entrepreneurs are the individuals and teams who put together the various insights and resources from networksand then work to build the organizations that provide the new products and services.In my personal experience, entrepreneurs are essential to innovationeither founding a new business or working within an existing organization.Entrepreneurs take the ideas and make something from nothing.'

We need entrepreneurs of all sorts.Commercial entrepreneurs can mean more than economic profits. They can bring returns to society, too. And there also need to be social entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs within organizations. '

Why do I stress this?Because entrepreneurs challenge the way things are; they challenge the status quo.And wethose of us who govern the status quo or have powerful positions within the status quoneed to make room for entrepreneurs and encourage them.'

To achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, governments, NGOs, and the private sector must all work together to unleash a massive wave of entrepreneurship that generates breakthrough companies at a record pace. That's how we'll create cleaner, more affordable power. That's how we'll produce and distribute more food. That's how we'll create hundreds of millions of new jobs for the growing, global middle class."

To succeed, entrepreneurs need networks. Networks of capital. Networks of talent and expertise. Networks of customers and trading partners. Networks of distribution.'

Governments, in turn, should leverage their power as rule-makers and conveners, and help develop the networks that help entrepreneurs turn their breakthrough ideas into scalable businesses.'

For example, in Finland, broadband Internet access is enshrined as a legal rightbecause the Finnish government recognizes how important Internet access is now to personal and professional development.'

In Chile, the government helps facilitate networks of talent and expertise through a highly selective seed accelerator program called Startup Chile, which offers international entrepreneurs a one-year visa and grants of around $30,000 to develop their business ideas in Chile.'

In Germany, the government partners with local industry and unions on an apprenticeship program in which nearly 60 percent of the nation's young people receive extended training in hundreds of occupations. This ensures that local businesses have a highly skilled workforce to draw upon, and that millions of German citizens acquire skills and expertise that are in high demand from employers."

At LinkedIn, we are developing something we call the Economic Grapha corpus of information that will ultimately map the professional profiles of roughly 3.3 billion people in the global workforce; every full-time and part-time job opportunity; and the skills that are needed to obtain those jobs.'

We are now sharing information from our Economic Graph with governments and NGOs around the world, to help countries, states, and cities better develop the kinds of networks that catalyze entrepreneurism.'

In India, the Government of Kerala is using LinkedIns data insights and technology to understand skills in demand, to design appropriate curricula, and to connect job seekers with mentors and other support mechanisms and ultimately to jobs.'

In London, the Greater London Authority incorporated LinkedIn data about current employer skills requirements into its Digital Talent initiative, a 7 million pound sterling fund designed to help young people get the right skills to fill jobs in Londons digital, creative, and technology sectors.'

We also have a multi-year agreement with the World Bank to develop a Competitiveness and Insights dashboard for over 300 cities across the world.'

This partnership will enable both the World Bank and local policymakers to evaluate the entrepreneurial capital of cities. Our entrepreneurial index will capture the movement and growth of entrepreneurs in a given city, and measure the strength of their local and global networks. This will help these 300 cities track how well they're producing and retaining entrepreneurial talent, and lead to better, more data-driven decisions about the economic and education policies these cities are using to facilitate business development and innovation."

As projects like these suggest, the tools are now available for assessing overall economic conditions and intelligently improving them.'

Similarly, the technologies that researchers and entrepreneurs around the world are developing in AI, robotics, genetics, transportation, energy, and more have the potential to dramatically improve lives for billions of people.'

But we will never achieve the more equitable and prosperous world the UN Sustainable Development Goals envision if it's just venture capitalists and entrepreneurs making bold bets on the future."

Government and civil society leaders must act boldly tooand look for opportunities to enable entrepreneurship and innovation.'

Of course, in times of great technological change, there is always the urge to hit the brakes and slow down. But while we certainly should move forward with thoughtfulness and prudence, our focus should always be on the futureand on the technologies and policies that will create new industries and new jobs, and the next wave of prosperity.'

Enshrining the past through policies that protect entrenched interests will not produce the kinds of major breakthroughs we'll need to achieve the UN's ambitious and inspiring vision of a better world. 2017 is no time to look backward or inward. Now, we must experiment, innovate, and collaborate to build that future for generations to come. I look forward to working with and learning from you all."

Thank you.'

'

ARTICLE: BUILDING A BETTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS'

This post is part of theBoardlist's #BeABetterBoard series of posts and interviews with leading CEOs and VCs from the tech industry. Thought leaders share what they've learned while serving and managing boards, what they wish they knew when they started, and what they're focusing on now. Here are a few of my reflections."

'

The ideal board member should have skills, knowledge, and a network that is mission-critical to the company, but that you cannot easily hire. Rather than treating your board as a collection of names, use it as a way to fill the critical gaps you don't have other ways to fill. One of the key challenges in front of Change.orgis that it needs to find a way to define both an impactful mission (in this case, empowering people everywhere to create the change they want to see through petitions) and a valuable business model that is connected to that mission. One of the best people I know at figuring out business models that dovetail with impactful missions is Nancy Lublin, who was the founder/CEO of Dress For Success, the CEO of Do Something, and is currently the founder/CEO of Crisis Text Line, which provides anyone who needs it with crisis counseling via SMS messaging. Because she's dedicated to her own mission, she's not someone thatChange.orgcan hire as an employee, butChange.org can leverage her unique expertise by bringing her on board as a board member."

You must have a clear idea of how each board member can add value, both individually, and more importantly, as part of the team. Far too many board members are selected for their brand value. A board of directors is a team, not a collection of all-stars. Hustle is a critical virtue. A world-famous CEO may look great on an annual report, but she may not have the time to be much help in scaling and running the business. For a company like my recent investment Nauto, which develops autonomous vehicle technology, it might seem like it made sense to target an industry titan. Actually, you want someone who has deep experience with both automotive and high-tech, and who has the time to provide in-depth advice. Someone, in other words, like

Nauto's latest board member Karen Francis who has experience as an executive at GM and Ford, but also as the former CEO of a tech company AcademixDirect."

When youre early in the lifecycle of your startup, the main challenge is to get the product to market so it can prove that it has a valuable, scalable business. Therefore, the key criteria for selecting board members is whether or not they have relevant skills (product, sales, marketing, etc.) to help the company get the product to market. For example, when PayPal was pulling together its board, Peter Thiel and Max Levchin decided that rather than looking for an industry expert in encryption or payments, that each would choose their friend who had the most startup experience. As a result, Scott Banister and I joined the board; Scott knew Max and had founded Submit-It and merged it with LinkExhange, while I knew Peter and had experience from founding SocialNet.'

When your company goes public the board members have to perform the vital governance role of evaluating the CEO and executive team. The best way to do this is for each key executive to be owned by a board member, who will develop a closer working relationship with that executive. These relationships are essential for evaluating the CEO and her potential successors. The art is developing these relationships without undermining the CEO. The board members should have the competence to talk with executives without introducing problems. That means avoiding damaging questions like "So, what is the CEO's greatest weakness?" in favor of something like "What do you see as the greatest challenges and opportunities facing the company?" This also provides the board member with a window into the thought processes of the executive, their career trajectory, and the state of the business.'

'

ARTICLE: WHY THE BEST ENTREPRENEURS LET FIRES BURN'

Every growing startup is surrounded by fires whether issues of product, market, competition, or operational scalability. Smart entrepreneurs don't try to fight every fire. Instead, they figure out which fires they can let burn so they can focus on the ones they absolutely have to fight. It's a delicate balance, because if you let fires go on too long, you'll get burned."

In this week'sseason finaleofMasters of Scale, we learn how to think about letting fires burn from serial entrepreneur Selina Tobaccowala, the co-founder of Evite, former President of SurveyMonkey, and founder of the new fitness startup Gixo. Selina has experienced the pain and strain of blitzscaling multiple times, including discovering, right after she joined, that SurveyMonkey didn't have any backups of its customer data. Yet that's precisely the kind of deliberate neglect that may be necessary for a startup to make the most of its opportunity. (LinkedIn didn't have a failover database for its first six years, for example.)"

While these kinds of stories seldom make it into aFortuneprofile orHarvard Business Reviewarticle, you'd be surprised how many overnight successes flirt with disaster the very next morning. When you're moving this quickly, you don't have time to study the issues for six months to get them right; that would just mean you're six months behind. And while we should certainly celebrate the touchdown passes involved in growing a business, we should also celebrate the brilliant punts that bought those businesses time to succeed."

We'll hear from Selina on her techniques for intelligent firefighting, including how she hires people who can see fires before she does, and how she keeps communications from breaking down during a crisis. You'll also hear tips from other entrepreneurs, like how Airbns Brian Chesky manages his to-do list, how Jerry Chen, former VMware and current Greylock partner, used customer complaints as a positive success metric, and how Cheryl Kellond of Apostrophe, a mobile health clinic, dealt with an actual fire!"

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this conversation.What are some of key fires you let burn that helped you succeed? How do you keep your team focused when the flames are licking at the door?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: SCALING UP THE NEXT SILICON VALLEY'

Silicon Valley has a remarkable track record of producing valuable technology companies. Of the 13 high-tech companies in the world that are worth over $100 billion, six of them hail from Silicon Valley. All of their headquarters sit in a 50-mile stretch from San Francisco to San Jose. Not bad for a region that accounts for less than 0.1% of the world's population! So the question on many minds is, Where is the next Silicon Valley?"

In this week'sMasters of Scale podcast, we ask this of Linda Rottenberg, the CEO and co-founder of Endeavor, which selects, mentors, and accelerates high-impact entrepreneurs around the world. When Linda started Endeavor with co-founder Pete Kellner, there literally wasn't a word for entrepreneur in Spanish. Today, Endeavor has mentored over 1,500 entrepreneurs, whose companies have created over 650,000 jobs and generated $10 billion in revenues in 2016. Not bad for a woman who was dubbed La Chica Loca by Argentinian entrepreneur Eduardo Elsztain, who thought she was crazy...and became Endeavor's first investor."

You'll learn why the kitchen table moment makes entrepreneurship so challenging (and mentorship so essential), and why Linda told Mexico's richest moguls that, as big fish, they should feed the little fish instead of eating them. You'll also hear the story of Endeavor's first entrepreneur, Wences Casares, and how his success withPatagon.comchanged everything for Endeavor and the aspiring entrepreneurs of Latin America."

We'll also be joined by marine biologist Kristen Marhaver, who explains why startups are like baby coral, and how building a scaleup ecosystem is like growing a coral reef, and by leaders from Next Silicon Valleys around the world. MIT's Joi Ito explains how Boston regained its startup mojo by focusing on biotech, while Tel Aviv's Yossi Vardi explains the unexpected source of

Israeli entrepreneurial success. And we'll also learn from Andrew Ng why Chinaisalready the Next Silicon Valley."

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this conversation.What are some of the ways that you're helping develop the coral reef of your ecosystem?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: HOW CODE FOR AMERICA MAKES GOOD GOVERNMENT GREAT'

Every year in the U.S., individuals, foundations, and corporations donate around $47 billion a year to non-profit organizations that focus on child welfare, food security, homelessness, and other areas that fall under the domain of "human services." In comparison, federal, state, and local government spend around $411 billion a year providing similar safety-net services.'

In his recent book The Givers: Money, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age, Inside Philanthropy founder David Callahan warns that we "face a future in which private donors who are accountable to no one may often wield more influence than elected public officials, who (in theory, anyway) are accountable to all of us.

And yet as statistics like the ones above suggest, even today's most ambitious philanthropists are hard-pressed to match the resources the government has at its disposal."

Thus, a compelling strategy for philanthropists looking to leverage the impact of their donations emerges: Invest in non-profits that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government institutions. After all, which outcome seems most achievable: Doubling annual contributions from every donor in the country, or making current government spending 10 percent more effective?'

As the Networked Age creates a new global sense of connectedness and accountability, philanthropy's role in creating public good will only increase especially as the Internet continues to democratize philanthropy through platforms like Change.org, Kiva.org, and Donorschoose.org. As Callahan notes in The Givers, "the bulk of charitable dollars take the form of modest contributions by millions of people." And it has never been easier than it is now to find new communities of participation, and new causes to support.'

Meanwhile, with the Giving Pledge, Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet have created new norms amongst society's wealthiest individuals about the moral commitments of great wealth and what role philanthropy should play in their lives."

Today, people like Bill and Melinda, Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan, and Laurene Powell Jobs aren't just writing checks they're operationally active and inventive in their giving. That business leaders with deep experience in capital allocation and building effective organizations and solutions at scale want to work on the planet's most wicked problems is an extremely positive development."

As Callahan notes in The Givers, many of today's major philanthropists "are zeroing in on precisely those problems that our political system has fumbled" and are attempting to "solve problems in ways that get around partisan gridlock or dated ideas or entrenched interest groups.

In my estimation, that's a good thing and why I've supported game-changing efforts like Bill Gates' Breakthrough Energy Coalition and the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub."

While Callahan recognizes that philanthropists with significant resources often have more "freedom and agility" than public officials to attack big challenges, he also worries that the ascendance of philanthropy will ultimately weaken our democratic process.'

But is the relationship between philanthropy and democracy really so zero-sum?'

As I've written elsewhere, government is the operating system of society it creates stability, security, rule of law, and other key institutions and foundations which enable private-sector innovation and investment."

At the same time, as I proposed to Atlantic writer Alana Semuels in a recent conversation, it's a false dichotomy to position private philanthropy and government as fundamentally at odds with each other with any increase in the former leading to a reduction of the latter. In reality, we can support both privately funded efforts to promote public good and support government as well."

Many of the non-profits and other social impact efforts I support including Change.org, Do Something, Kiva.org, and Crisis Textline are platforms that in some sense "compete" with government in that they create new spaces and mechanisms for the pursuit of collective good. But my support for them doesn't diminish our need for a strong, well-funded, and efficiently functioning government.'

Indeed, while the Trump Administration aims to "dismantle the administrative state," it's more important than ever to look for opportunities to address the real challenge of government namely, how can we make government operate more effectively and efficiently, instead of simply cutting crucial safety-net services and other programs that millions of people use to make their lives better?'

In pursuit of good government, a core component of my own philanthropic efforts involves funding creative non-profits that update and improve the services that We, the People have already committed to, using the principles and practices of the consumer technology industry.While such efforts are still relatively new, we've already seen how improving the implementation of existing government functions can have as much impact as advocating for new policies and new programs."

Code for America, a non-profit Ive supported for the last three years, has led the way in proving this theory of change.'

As the organization's Executive Director, Jennifer Pahlka, suggested in a recent Washington Post op-ed, modernizing "federal government IT so that it can deliver the digital services that the American public deserves" represents a huge opportunity we have now to improve the lives of every citizen.'

Take, for example, the work Code for America has done in making it easier for individuals in California to clear their criminal records of old, non-violent felony offenses that decrease their opportunities to get jobs, student loans, housing, and other resources that could help them become more productive citizens.'

In 2014, voters approved Proposition 47, a component of which expands the number of people who are able to reclassify old, non-violent felonies as misdemeanors -- but only if they persist through a fairly complicated application process.'

This process starts with going to a legal aid clinic with limited hours, waiting in line there, and filling out a long and confusing paper form. Then, individuals have to obtain their criminal records from the relevant police departments, wait two weeks to learn if they're eligible, wait even longer for a court date, show up to court, wait some more, complete more paperworkand then do it all again if they have a conviction in another county."

Thanks to such bureaucratic hurdles, only about 7 percent of eligible people in Los Angeles County have even started this process, and even fewer have successfully navigated it.'

But by developing a mobile phone app, Code for America is helping to change that, and thus helping to realize the full potential of the proposition that California voters approved three years ago.'

With Code for America's mobile phone app, individuals who hope to reclassify their old felonies no longer have to start the process by going to a legal aid clinic they do so on their phones. Then, these users receive text messages that guide them through the rest of the process, prompting them when they need to provide more information, reminding them of court dates, etc."

Approaches like this don't just provide a workaround to get better outcomes. Instead, they fundamentally instrument government processes so that public servants can understand how to improve them over time."

For example, the text messages that are exchanged as people try to clear their records evolve into a real-time database of the operational barriers that applicants encounter in the course of this process. All of this becomes data that public defenders, attorneys general, and court administrators can use to streamline processes for their benefit and the benefit of the people they represent.'

Take the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), i.e., food stamps. Code for America has created a mobile app for SNAP participants that helps them move through application process with clear online forms and follow-up text messages, just like its app for reclassifying old, non-violent criminal offenses.'

Over the course of this project, Code for America has been tracking the barriers that users encounter, then working closely with welfare offices to remove those barriers, one by one.'

When its data showed that many applicants in one county were receiving letters informing them of their interview date after the date of the interview, government officials quickly fixed the problem. When data showed that eligibility workers in another county were asking for unnecessary documentation and paperwork, government officials set them straight.'

Do this enough times and we have services that are not just easy to apply for but easy to actually use. And they cost taxpayers dramatically less to administrate because they take three steps, not thirty.'

Conventional wisdom holds that government is reluctant to innovate, and reluctant to adopt the iterative and consumer-focused mindset that private-sector companies use to improve their products and services. But Code for Americas work with state and local governments and the work of the United States Digital Service in the White House prove otherwise.'

Still, government is designed to move more slowly than the private sector, and non-profits like Code for America need investment and patience to show results at scale. But the fact that the State of California has officially adopted many of Code for Americas practices and contracted with them to take their SNAP program to every county, and that other states are eager to follow suit, means this movement is on track to have huge impact.'

In an era of massive technological change and the uncertainty and political upheaval that creates, major philanthropists looking to pursue the greatest possible social impact have an incredible range of options to pursue. That so many wealthy individuals now feel inspired to spend a great portion of their resources, in their own lifetimes, on philanthropic causes they are personally passionate about, through new means and methods, is an overwhelmingly positive trend.'

At the same time, it's also extremely important to strengthen the public sector through philanthropic support of organizations like Code for America. Investing in this manner provides both a smart way to leverage one's impact, and also an opportunity to improve the one institution that is designed to serve us all."

ARTICLE: FIRST PRINCIPLES FROM NETFLIX ON BUILDING COMPANY CULTURE'

Nearly every successful technology company has a strong culturea true articulation of how employees work together. It's almost impossible to succeed without one. But that doesn't mean that they have a good culture. Just ask Reed Hastings. Before he led Netflix to global dominance, he co-founded a software company that grew from garage to IPO, but ultimately couldn't evolve with the times. As CEO of Pure Software, Reed had built an organization he didn't want to work for. Selling was a relief, and he promised himself that he'd be far more thoughtful about culture with his next company."

In this week's Masters of Scale podcast, Reed joins me to talk about how he shaped the culture at Netflix, and why he believes it was the key strength that allowed it to shift from renting movie DVDs via snail mail to being the leading provider of Internet television, accounting for over 1/3 of all Internet traffic in the US."

You'll learn the hidden value of Netflix' famous culture deck; why Hastings favors first principle thinkers over rule followers; and why letting employees choose for themselves whether to sip champagne in first class or ride a Greyhound bus on business trips ties into first principle thinking. Reed lays out The Keeper Test, and why every employee at Netflix can ask their manager to take it. And you'll hear the specific distinction that explains why he never refers to Netflix co-workers as family."

Along the way, we'll be joined by guests like Aneel Bhusri of Workday and Jeff Weiner of LinkedIn, who argue that one of the most important things a CEO can do is to teach people how to reject perfect candidates who don't share the organization's cultural values; Margaret Heffernan, who explains why a competitive managerial approach causes more damage and destruction and waste than any other misunderstanding she knows; and Wharton professor Adam Grant, who discusses what founders can learn from Travis Kalanick's resignation at Uber."

As always, I'd like to hear your thoughts and reactions to this conversation. What are the key first principles of your company's culture, and how do you impart them to others?"

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS'

I don't often write immediate reactions to recent news. However, after reading an article published by The Information regarding sexual harassment allegations against venture capitalist Justin Caldbeck of Binary Capital, I feel that the subject is so important that I must write immediately."

In the article, journalist Reed Albergotti compiles first-hand accounts from six women, including three willing to be cited by name, who say that Caldbeck behaved inappropriately toward them in the course of business dealings.'

One who was seeking funding says that during a dinner meeting Caldbeck "offered to take her to a nearby hotel room." Another said that Caldbeck "groped her under a table at a Manhattan hotel bar," then texted her at 3AM and asked her to call him back.'

As Sarah Lacy has already noted at Pando, this is a story that "should have been greeted with far more outrage than it has been."She is absolutely right.This reported behavior is completely outrageous and unacceptable.Three other women also brave enough to come forward have three more similarly unacceptable stories.And, who knows how many other women are out there with other stories.'

I know Reed Albergotti as a thorough reporter who carefully researches his stories. In this instance, he's interviewed at least six women who gave him first-hand accounts of their experiences with Caldbeck, and three who were willing to go on record with their names, despite the potential blowback that often comes to those with the courage to speak out in such situations."

So, why do we have a lack of outrage and commentary?This is important, because the question for women entrepreneurs is whether people just dont care.Heres why writing quickly is important: YES, MANY OF US DO CARE.This is entirely immoral and outrageous behavior.And it falls to us to stand with you, to speak out, and to act.'

So, again, why the lack of outrage and commentary?On the charitable interpretation, people are fearful of stepping into a he-said/she-said dispute where they have no information.Here, of course, its a he-said/they-said situation which brings a very high standard of evidence to the table.'

Other folks may think: well, thats bad behavior but not my problem.If you think that, and work here in venture, think again.We all need to solve this problem.If you stay silent, if you dont act, then you allow this problem to perpetuate.And you send the public signal, we dont care.'

This year, Silicon Valley technology companies have been receiving some very good criticism on fairness and decency on gender.The criticism ranges from employment and compensation to cultures that harbor sexual predators, necessitating outside intervention such as Eric Holders investigation at Uber.'

This criticism is important.I welcome it.We should all welcome it, and of course, remedy it.One unfortunate side effect is that people think that many Silicon Valley technology companies have gender-hostile environments.'

However, fortunately, most companies in Silicon Valley operate without such institutional dysfunction.Most companies in Silicon Valley build cultures of dignity and collaboration in gender and they have competent HR functions in place that ensure healthy and respectful behavior within a company. When complaints arise, well-run companies take action in a prompt, clearly denoted, and consequential manner.'

But many corporate sexual harassment policies are oriented to what happens between employees of the company. As entrepreneur Gina Bianchini mentioned to me recently, the issue that the venture capital industry faces is that it lacks a good HR function that covers what happens between venture capitalists and entrepreneurs.'

Thus, on a structural level, venture capitalists unfortunately have no HR department to prevent predatory and inappropriate behavior, and so try to characterize (falsely) their actions as innocent flirtatiousness or banter.'

If a professor propositions his adult university student, and defends his behavior by suggesting its just two consenting adults, what do we think?Outrageous and immoral behavior that ignores the power relationship.'

If a manager propositions his employee and defends his behavior by suggesting its just two consenting adults, what do we think?Outrageous and immoral behavior that ignores the power relationship.'

If an interviewing manager at a corporation propositions an applicant and defends his behavior by suggesting its just two consenting adults, what do we think?Outrageous and immoral behavior that ignores the power relationship.'

So, if a venture capitalist propositions a woman entrepreneur who is seeking funding?SAME ANSWER!'

I think the industry should actively work on building a kind of industry-wide HR function, so that venture capitalists who engage in such behavior face the same sort of consequences that they would if their overtures were directed at an employee.'

In the meantime, anyone who wants to improve our industry's working conditions and overall ethical climate should be clear with each other that the kinds of behaviors cited in The Information article are unacceptable."

This means a few different things:'

1. VCs should understand that they have the same moral position to the entrepreneurs they interact with that a manager has to an employee, or a college professor to a student.'

That is to say, as soon as you start discussing potential business deals of any kind with an entrepreneur, there is no such thing as an innocent or appropriate sexual proposition or remark. If you are interested in pursuing a business relationship of some kind, you forfeit the prospect of pursuing a romantic or sexual relationship. If you want to mutually pursue a romantic or sexual relationship, then forfeit the prospect of a business relationship.'

2. If anyone sees a venture capitalist behaving differently from this standard, they should disclose this information to their colleagues as appropriate just as one would if one saw a manager interacting inappropriately with an employee, or a college professor with a student.'

3. Any VC who agrees that this is a serious issue that deserves zero tolerance and I certainly hope most do think this way should stop doing business with VCs who engage in this behavior.LPs should stop investing.Entrepreneurs of all genders should stop considering those

VCs.This behavior occurs in our industry not just because some believe it's no big deal, but also because those who do find it unacceptable don't do enough to actively discourage it."

I applaud the actions of Niniane Wang, Susan Ho, and Leiti Hsu, who've shown great courage in publicizing the inappropriate behavior they experienced when dealing with Justin Caldbeck. I hope their bravery will encourage others to get off the sidelines and take more proactive measures in addressing and correcting instances of bad behavior that occur within our industry."

And, if youd like to speak up simply, to highlight your support in this issue, then post in your favorite medium: #DecencyPledge.'

Two additional notes:'

First, various friends and I have discussed the challenges for women entrepreneurs over the years.I am unfortunately not surprised that there is a problem here; I am impressed with the bravery of the women stepping forward and so the time becomes now to speak and act.'

Second, its not relevant, but given that Im making a case for ethics, I should note that Greylock Discovery Fund is an investor in Ninianes company.'

ARTICLE: WHY PANELS SUCK'

Soon, self-driving cars will turn Highway 101 into an office park, and we'll all keep working right through rush hour. But where is the technology that will liberate us from a productivity killer that's nearly as lethal as the morning commute?"

At thousands of conferences every year, millions of panel sessions consume billions of man-hours of attention. And for what? A panel is an algorithm that makes three to six leaders in a given field sound dull.'

I'm not the first person to say this. Or even the second."

By now, there have probably even been some panels on why panels suck. And yet panels remain an entrenched part of the conference experience which is unfortunate because conferences are so critical for professional development.'

In The Startup of You and The Alliance, I write about how personal networks have replaced the company as the main way that people advance their careers now. Instead of climbing the career ladder in a single organization, professionals jump from opportunity to opportunity. The personal networks they develop play a major role in how successfully they navigate this journey. (Personal networks also end up benefiting companies too, as individual professionals cultivate ever-widening spheres of intelligence and reciprocity that increase their effectiveness as employees.)'

One key way to develop the kinds of relationships that lead to strong networks is to position yourself at the hubs of where information flows. Industry conferences are great places to do this.'

Anyone starting out in a new industry should go to as many major conferences as they can manage. But not for the panels or even the keynotes. For many people, the primary draw of conferences is everything that happens in between the official business.'

My friend and fellow venture capitalist David Hornik even established an annual gathering in 2007 called The Lobby where all of the components that typically define traditional conferences were cut in favor of more time for free-form networking. "In a great conference, the conversation in the lobby is the content," he explained in his introductory invitation.'

At most conferences, however, panels persist as a key organizing element. And obviously they have their virtues. In fact, from a conference organizers' perspective, panels make a lot of sense. Putting multiple people on the same stage increases the chances of multiple points of view and a broader range of content at least in theory. Panels also help attract larger audiences, because each panel participant will likely appeal to different sets of conference-goers and bring their own constituencies. Finally, they divide responsibilities in a way that participants typically welcome. While an appearance on a panel means you won't have as much time in the spotlight as you would if giving a speech, it also means you won't have to spend much time or really any time preparing."

For conference organizers, panels represent an undemanding ask. For participants, they're a way to put themselves in the middle of the action without needing to invest significant amounts of prep time. Unfortunately, this usually ends up creating a "co-owners are no owners" dynamic. When responsibility gets so distributed, no one feels obligated to carry the show themselves. Even moderators may feel comfortable just winging it.'

But this is only the start of a panel's structural problems. Because there are so many people to introduce, introductions take too long. Because panelists know they'll only have limited time to speak, they tend to focus on clear and simple messages that will resonate with the broadest number of people. The result is that you get one person giving you an overly simplistic take on the subject at hand. And then the process repeats itself multiple times! Instead of going deeper or providing more nuance, the panel format ensures shallowness."

Even worse, this shallow discourse manifests as polite groupthink. After all, panelists attend conferences for the same reasons that attendees do they want to make connections and build relationships. So panels end up heavy on positivity and agreement, and light on the sort of discourse which, through contrasting opinions and debate, could potentially be more illuminating.'

In this context, it's just safer to be upbeat and agreeable than it is to be negative or contrarian. Even competitors behave in overly diplomatic fashion. And, unfortunately, any parties whose disregard for each other is strong enough to produce candor aren't likely to agree to appear on the same panel!"

For all these reasons, most panels aren't very instructive unless they're on a subject you know absolutely nothing about. And while I do sometimes participate in panels, I generally do so only as a favor to a friend."

As both a participant and as a member of the audience, I much prefer fireside chats i.e., a dialogue between two people who both have clear-cut roles to play. The interviewer is there to ask relevant and perceptive questions. The correspondent knows the audience is expecting in-depth answers.'

With the fireside format, both parties feel accountable for their role in the conversation so they invest an appropriate amount of time in preparing. Since there are only two people involved, there's also much less repetition. Ideas can be explored with more nuance, and at the same time, the conversation can go in more directions, because there aren't five people waiting for their turn at bat on Question X."

While I believe that fireside chats have significant advantages over panels, this doesn't mean that panels can't be improved. The key to making them better is to make them more structured to essentially turn them into semi-formal debates:"

The sense of competition this introduces would probably make it harder to attract panelists. But it would also raise the stakes enough to ensure that those who do participate are sufficiently invested in the endeavor. Even with these changes, I'd still choose a fireside chat over a panel. But at least panels would suck somewhat less."

Agree? Disagree? After this solo diatribe, I'd like to hear what the other panelists think!"

'

ARTICLE: DOUBLING DOWN ON THE FUTURE: WHY I'M SUPPORTING ALEC ROSS FOR GOVERNOR OF MARYLAND "

As technology entrepreneur and former State Department senior advisor Alec Ross suggests in his New York Times best-seller, The Industries of the Future, prosperity goes to societies "that don't just double down on the past but that can adapt and direct their citizens toward industries that are growing.

As an entrepreneur and investor, I've always focused on the future, because as Alec suggests, it's the industries of the future where innovation occurs, where new products and services create new opportunities, new markets, and ultimately new jobs. An entrepreneur or company that doesn't actively invest in the future will ultimately lose out to competitors that do. The same is true for countries. Thats why it's so concerning for America's future and the future prosperity of its citizens, especially in places where industries have declined and the economy has stagnated that President Trump is so focused on doubling down on the past."

For example, when the president announced in early June that the U.S. will be leaving the Paris climate accord, he touted "a big opening of a brand new [coal] mine" in western Pennsylvania as evidence of the kind of economic dynamism we can unleash if we just forsake our global obligations and alliances and put America First.'

In reality, U.S. coal mining employment peaked in 1923, at 862,536 miners.'

By the time Donald Trump was born in 1946, the coal mining industry had already lost around half of those jobs to automation, even as the industry's overall productivity continued to grow. In recent years, the ascendance of natural gas has led to even further job loss in the U.S. coal industry. Today it employs around 50,000 coal miners and the new mine President Trump touted won't change that much.It will create approximately 70 to 100 full-time jobs."

Cheerleading for the coal industry may be the cheapest and most effective way to get scientists and environmentalists hot under the collar, but it will do little to improve the nation's overall economic prospects. Instead of betting on an industry that peaked as a source of employment in 1923, we should invest in the future and pursue programs and policies that help people prepare for careers in emergent technologies like AI, robotics, big data analytics, and genomics. While many entrepreneurs, investors, and Fortune 500 CEOs understand this basic fact, we need government leaders who embrace it as well through education, entrepreneurism, and innovation."

In recent years, America has been polarizing into high-output counties marked by economic dynamism, and low-output counties that are stagnating. To reverse this trend, and ensure that American productivity and prosperity are more broadly distributed, we need to elect forward-thinking mayors and governors who are committed to creating better pathways to meaningful, well-paid work in their local communities.'

Alec started his career as a public school teacher in Baltimore. Recognizing the opportunities and potential inequities that the Internet had begun to create in the 1990s, he became an early advocate for bringing broadband access and technology training to low-income communities. In 2000, he co-founded a non-profit called One Economy Corporation that helped hundreds of thousands of people access the Internet and new sources of information about job training, healthcare, and other vital services.'

It was in this era that he and I first connected, as he reached out for advice on how best to leverage the power of networks to scale social impact in the way that consumer Internet companies were beginning to do with communications services and e-commerce. In 2008, the Obama campaign tapped Alec to oversee its technology policy. In 2009, Alec joined the State Department, where he helped integrate technology into U.S. diplomacy efforts in more than 80 countries, addressing everything from healthcare and ethnic conflicts to entrepreneurism and innovation.'

Alec's experiences have left him with knowledge that is both broadly strategic and critically hands-on. He's seen how the right technology policy can lift a country's economy, and how the wrong one can drive it into decline and irrelevance. During his time in Washington, Alec forged strong points of connectivity with Silicon Valley, as he worked to infuse more innovation, entrepreneurism, and new technologies into America's international diplomacy efforts."

But while Alec understands that government needs to learn from business, he also recognizes that government is not a business. The challenges and obligations of the government are ultimately much broader than even the most broad-based businesses. A government must serve all its citizens, not just those it deems most profitable or most productive.'

Along with this mandate, though, government must also learn to act more entrepreneurially. It should incorporate innovation into its day-to-day processes just as strongly as businesses do. It should regularly experiment and refine and learn from feedback.That's why I support organizations like Code for America, which helps government agencies deliver services more effectively to the citizens they serve, and the Breakthrough Energy Coalition, the Bill Gates-led initiative to facilitate public-private partnerships in the clean-energy sector."

Governments aren't and should never aspire to be businesses. And it is important that we elect leaders who have experience with public service, who understand that their job is to serve all their constituents in ways that give the greatest number of people the widest range of opportunities to achieve good economic and cultural outcomes for themselves."

One crucial component to creating the jobs of the future involves putting astrong educational infrastructure in place, so companies have talented, well-trained people to hire.'

Here, the contrast between Alec and President Trump is significant. The latter regularly tweets that he wants to create JOBS! JOBS! JOBS! And, following the lead of President Obama, who expanded support for apprenticeship programs during his time in office, Trump says he will do the same. But he's only asking for a slight increase in the apprenticeship program budget while simultaneously proposing to cut the U.S. Labor Department's job program budget by 40 percent."

Recognizing the growing demand for highly skilled workers who can thrive in a 21st century economy based on innovation and technology, Alec has a plan to bring computer science education to every public school in Maryland a huge improvement from the 40 percent that currently offer it. What Alec understands is that high-quality public education is a massively effective economic policy, one that will create far more long-term benefits for America's economy than a nostalgic bid to resurrect the soot-covered industrial dynamism of 1923."

While President Trump believes that too much globalization and automation are killing jobs, what he fails to acknowledge is that globalization and automation are the great forces driving innovation now. Throughout history, innovation is what has created jobs, and thus, innovation is what America needs more of now.'

Demonizing automation, robot workers, and AI and ceding the development of such technologies to other countries that will use them to produce goods even faster and less expensively than we do, is a fast track to ensuring a future that puts America at a global disadvantage. Instead of burying our heads in the sand, or hoping that a handful of new coal mines will turn things around, we should embrace these new technologies and also invest in the educational infrastructure and training programs that will help more people capitalize on the new jobs and opportunities they create. Innovation that simply boosts productivity is not enough. We need inclusive innovation that helps create meaningful work and stronger economic pathways for a broad middle class.'

Another key factor in creating the jobs of the future involves openness a subject Alec explores in depth in his book. Today, networks, big data, robotics, and other new technologies all make it possible for entrepreneurs, companies, and even countries to punch above their weight in ways that were impossible when natural resources, brute manpower, and physical capital were the primary sources of wealth and power.'

Competition is strong. Conditions change quickly. So speed matters. A flexible, collaborative mindset matters. To be successful in today's new global information-based economy, Alec writes, "A society must be open in order to exchange new ideas, conduct research free from political interference, and pursue creative projects, even if they fail. Innovation requires this stripe of openness. It cannot see outside markets as enemy territory.

This is exactly the kind of forward-looking, technology-first leadership that America needs to succeed in the 21st century. While it's important to support entrepreneurs who think like this, it's equally important to support elected officials who do as well."

These days, I'm often contacted by political candidates who say they are reaching out for ideas but really want campaign contributions. Alec, however, reached out to me years ago, not as a political candidate but rather as a former schoolteacher who'd had the foresight to see how digital technologies could help millions of under-served citizens achieve broader access to various forms of information that could dramatically improve their lives. In the years that followed, we maintained a wide-ranging and productive dialogue on evolving digital technologies and the opportunities they were creating."

Now, Maryland has an opportunity to elect a governor who understands how to create long-term economic prosperity and opportunities for the people he serves. That's why I'm contributing the maximum amount to Alec's campaign, and why I strongly encourage others to join me in making a contribution. America's need for smart, entrepreneurial leaders who understand that jobs and prosperity come from doubling down on the future, not the past, has never been so great."

ARTICLE: WHAT ALL ENTREPRENEURS CAN LEARN FROM SCALING NON-PROFITS'

Even with access to capital, resources, and talent, it's incredibly hard to scale a technology startup. Just imagine trying to scale up a non-profit organization without the advantages of the for-profit world. Like the famous comparison of Ginger Rogers to her dance partner Fred Astaire, non-profit entrepreneurs have to do everything that their for-profit siblings do, but backwards, and in high heels. The degree of difficulty involved in almost every aspect of scaling a non-profit is much higher -- from raising money to recruiting & retaining talent, to pivoting toward opportunities. My friend Nancy Lublin, who has successfully scaled three different non-profit organizations, is truly a master of scale. Her secret? Grit."

On this week's Masters of Scale podcast, you'll hear how grit one part determination, one part ingenuity, and one part laziness (in the best sense of the word) allowed Nancy to scale Dress For Success from three nuns and a law student in Spanish Harlem into an organization that serves women in 145 cities across 23 countries; lift Do Something out of bankruptcy into a movement powered by 5.5 million young people; and grow Crisis Text Line into a service that's processed more than 30 million text messages since its founding."

Along the way, you'll learn the secret to getting people to help your cause, how to ask for more than seems reasonable (and why you should), how Donald Trump passed on helping Dress For Success but ended up inadvertently supercharging Crisis Text Line's growth, and why Nancy's fear of ending up as a Scooby-Doo villain (!) turned her into a serial entrepreneur."

How can you apply the power of grit in your own endeavors? Who are the people and organizations who can take your idea forward, and how can you get them on your side?'

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: IF YOU WANT YOUR COMPANY TO INNOVATE LIKE GOOGLE, YOUR JOB IS TO MANAGE THE CHAOS'

Many companies loudly proclaim their desire to innovate, but how many know what it actually takes?'

The most innovative companies don't tell their employees how to innovate. They suppress traditional management and instead manage the chaos, trusting it will lead to creative breakthroughs."

This approach is epitomized by former Google CEO and Alphabet Chair Eric Schmidt. In the latest episode of the Masters of Scale podcast, he shares the unconventional approach to management that took Google from a small startup with fewer than 100 employees to the global giant with over $30 Billion in annual revenues and 30,000 employees which he handed back to Larry Page when he stepped out of the CEO role.'

As you'll hear on the podcast, Eric is quick to deflect praise, and its this very humility that allowed him to manage the chaos at Google so effectively. He knows that the best ideas don't spring from a solitary genius; they come from networks of individuals that work to refine and improve those ideas."

So how, exactly, do you manage chaos? Eric shares the importance of both open debate and quick decision making (which he picked up from pilot training). You'll learn how to create an environment in which people challenge and build on each other's ideas (hint: it involves employees who aren't afraid to argue with the CEO); the specific management process that allowed Google to make major decisions like buying YouTube in a fraction of the time other companies might take; and the hidden reason (one youve never heard before) for Google's famous 20% time policy."

You'll also hear from guests like Zynga founder Mark Pincus, who uses the story of his failure with the social network Tribe to explain why it's so important to separate your winning instincts from your losing ideas."

How do you manage chaos? Can you think of a time when allowing your team "a dash of insubordination" enabled your company to be more innovative?'

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: WHEN YOU'RE LEADING AT SCALE: EVERY PLAN IS MADE TO BE BROKEN"

It isn't easy leading an organization that's doubling or tripling in size every year. To lead a blitzscaling organization, you need to be as skilled at breaking plans as you are at making them. And few people do this as well as Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, who has been instrumental in building two of the world's five most valuable companies. In fact, Sheryl has become the archetype of a scale leader in Silicon Valley (When investors like me advise startup founders, we often say We have to find you your Sheryl Sandberg.) And on this weeks Masters of Scale podcast she shares the specific strategies and tactics she follows during periods of rapid growth and change."

Youll hear why Sheryl made a very specific promise to her new team when she joined Google and why she broke that promise after just one week on the job. Youll hear how she makes it safe for people on her team to speak up, why she values diversity and why an aligned mission is a secret weapon: "The thing about leadership is you need people to follow you enthusiastically. Rather than tell people to march four steps, you want to tell people, 'We're heading there, get there as quickly as you can.

Youll also learn the wise advice that Sheryl's late husband Dave Goldberg gave her, which has been the secret to the success of Sheryl and Mark Zuckerberg's 9-year partnership at Facebook, and still shapes their weekly schedule. In addition, Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates make cameo appearances, with Mark explaining the single rule he follows when hiring, and Bill sharing the one thing he wishes he could tell his younger self, when it comes to leading teams."

Id love to hear your own experiences making and breaking plans. If you could give your younger self one piece of advice about leading through growth and change, what would you say?'

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to share your answers with the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale. The producers of the show and I will be on the lookout for the best examples to feature in the future!'

ARTICLE: MY NEW INVESTMENT IN CHANGE.ORG, THE GLOBAL HUB FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT '

We live in an era of massive public marches and standing-room-only town hall meetings. People today expect opportunities to actively engage with the legislators who govern them and the companies they do business with.'

Change.org, the global hub for collective action, is a crucial democratizing force in this era of growing civic participation. It helps enable a world where you don't need to hire a lobbyist to have real impact on the issues and policies that matter to you."

Change.org is accessible, it's transparent, and it's flexible enough to help people collectively pursue everything from lower monthly banking fees to better criminal justice system policies for sexual assault survivors."

In fact, I believe in Change.org's mission so strongly that I'm leading its latest funding round of more than $30 million, with the largest personal impact investment Ive made to date."

Change.org performs functions that are key to a healthy democracy functions that were once mostly the domain of daily newspapers and other traditional news outlets. It informs its users about issues and developments that are of local, national, and even global relevance.It gives a megaphone to marginalized and disenfranchised communities. Its users and petition starters hold powerful interests accountable.'

Most importantly, Change.org functions within the framework of what Tim O'Reilly calls "an architecture of participation." At Change.org, users don't just consume information. They act on it, by starting and signing petitions that have real impact.That's why, since Ben Rattray founded Change.org in 2007, the platform has attracted nearly 200 million users in 196 countries.'

In its decade of existence, Change.org petitions have resulted in more than 21,000 victories, i.e., instances in which a government agency, corporation, or other entity has changed a regulation or a policy in the face of a Change.org petition urging it to do so.'

So when Change.org's users sign a petition, they know they're not just sounding off on a message board or engaging in empty rhetoric. They're leveraging the human capital of their voices with thousands or even millions of like-minded others, in a way that regularly results in significant impact."

Indeed, Change.org petitions have helped achieve grants of clemency for dozens of people serving lifetime prison sentences for nonviolent offenses. In the U.K. last year, a Change.org petition signed by more than 650,000 people and delivered to the British Prime Minister's residence by the family of computer scientist Alan Turing helped convince officials to pardon 49,000 men who'd been convicted of felonies under homophobic laws. In Mexico City, residents and municipal leaders used the Change.org platform to collaborate on the development of the city's new constitution."

Because of Change.org's intrinsic architecture of participation, it harnesses the full power of its users' knowledge and interests. Petition signers become petition creators, and Change.org effectively becomes a marketplace of civic engagement, where many campaigns are presented and the most relevant and powerful ones achieve traction."

As with most platforms and marketplaces, information spreads fast on Change.org. Feedback loops are tight and easy to analyze. As a result, innovation, iteration, and replication all accelerate. Activists seeking to drive change of some kind can experiment with different petitions, to find which ones resonate most with users, and which ones lead to real change. Once such petitions are identified, they can be reproduced and replicated. A petition that leads to a regulatory change in one city can serve as a template for similar petitions around the country.'

Change.org benefits from the same virtuous cycle that Amazon, Airbnb, and other consumer Internet giants depend on to improve user engagement, identify the products and services that consumers want most, and increase revenues.'

Early on, Ben Rattray recognized that the power of networks and platforms should be applied to social impact as well as consumer Internet businesses. While critics sometimes dismiss online petitions as "clicktivism," the premise underlying this critique is completely misguided. It isn't bad to strive to make civic engagement more accessible and convenient and personalized, as effortless as one-click shopping. It's good! As Change.org has proven over and over, petition signatures can lead to victories and real policy changes that make the world better.'

As a society, we should be doing everything we can to build powerful, easy-to-use civic spaces where upstarts and idealists can effectively challenge entrenched interests. Where people believe their participation makes a real difference. Where every day, in transparent fashion, individual citizens can join forces in highly democratic efforts to make the world a better place.'

That's why I'm making this investment in Change.org."

In my primary capacity as a partner at Greylock, I invest in and serve on the boards of companies that focus on increasing their equity value. Many of these businesses, like LinkedIn and Airbnb, have strong social missions, but their principal long-term responsibility is to maximize returns to shareholders.'

Change.org is different. From its inception, it has emphasized increasing social good over maximizing shareholder value, and it will continue to do so. In fact, it will soon be transitioning from a certified B corporation to a full-fledged benefit corporation a structural status that will legally establish and ensure its commitment to public social benefit.'

Because Change.org balances social impact and investor returns in this way, my investment in it will be a personal one rather than through Greylock.'

While I and other investors participating in this round believe Change.org's equity value will increase over time, it's important to ensure that its social mission remains its primary objective as it expands into a platform that turns petitions into movements and enables deeper and more powerful collective action."

As part of my commitment to help Change.org achieve its mission, I am pledging to donate any increase in equity value I realize from this investment to non-profit organizations, including Change.org's own charitable arm, the Change.org Foundation."

Whenever I evaluate potential ventures and projects, including philanthropic and impact investments I've made in organizations like Kiva.org, Segovia, Endeavor, Mozilla, and Change.org, I consider the organization's capacity to scale."

In doing so, I consider number of users, the depth of impact on those users, and how that impact plays out over time.'

In other words, the organizatoins, products, or services that achieve the greatest scale don't just attract millions or even billions of users. They also engage them in meaningful ways. And persist over time."

To achieve impact over time, you need financial sustainability whether you're a public benefit corporation like Change.org, a non-profit like Kiva or Endeavor, or a foundation like Mozilla that owns a revenue-generating for-profit subsidiary."

Because many other Internet leaders believe like I do that Change.org will play a key role in empowering crucial new forms of collective action over the coming years, we've been able to assemble a world-class Board of Directors to assist Ben Rattray."

Nancy Lublin, founder of Crisis Text Line and former CEO of Do Something, will be chairing the new board. Allen Blue, LinkedIn's VP of Product of Management and one of my co-founders there, will be serving on the Change.org board as well, as will Joe Greenstein, founder of InnerSpace and Flixster, and Sarah Imbach, an angel investor and entrepreneur who was COO at 23andme and a longtime colleague of mine at LinkedIn and Paypal.I have personal experience with how talented each of these board members are through my work with them in other capacities over the years."

As Change.org's founder, Ben has always believed that Change.org could deliver the most social impact over time by developing strong revenue streams and the financial autonomy that comes with that. That's one of the reasons I was attracted to Ben's vision, and why I made my first investment in Change.org in 2014."

In its early years, Change.org pursued an ad-based revenue model that relied heavily on large non-profit sponsors and other similar entities. While this model generated tens of millions of dollars in revenue and helped thousands of nonprofit organizations reach new supporters, it wasnt able to keep pace with Change.org's rapid user growth."

So Charge.org has shifted its model to incorporate user subscriptions, crowdfunding, and a promoted petition product that is accessible to individuals and organizations.'

Moving forward, a major focus of the Board will be to help Change.org continue developing and refining its business model in ways that increase its capacity to pursue its mission for the long term.'

With Change.org, financial autonomy plays a particularly strategic role. A global utility that anyone can use to persuade governments to change laws and corporations to change policies must be completely reliable. It needs to be transparent, and beholden to no special interests or agendas.'

That's why it's so important to improve and diversify Change.org's business model, and ensure that it has the resources to continue adding features and tools that can help turn petitions into movements."

With its nearly 200 million users, Change.org is already a major global platform.'

But I believe we're still in the early stages of what Change.org can accomplish."

As NYU professor Clay Shirky explained in his book, Here Comes Everybody, the kinds of collective action human beings have traditionally engaged in have been limited by the costs that come with managing large-scale group efforts. "For the last hundred years the big organizational question has been whether any given task was best taken on by the state, directing the effort in a planned way, or by businesses competing in a market," he wrote.'

Now, however, the Internet, email, smartphones, and related technologies have dramatically lowered the costs of group organization and management -- so much so that individuals can self-organize and collaborate, in decentralized, asynchronous, and loosely coordinated fashion, on projects that once only formal organizations would have had the resources to pursue.'

Platforms like Change.org further amplify this new capacity for decentralized collective action by making it easier for people to find the issues and campaigns that matter most to them, and giving them an evolving set of tools to leverage their impact.'

The potential for individuals to create real and lasting change through collective action -- by influencing electing officials, by influencing corporations, by connecting over shared interests and pooling resources-- is rapidly growing more powerful.Every day brings new opportunities to act on your values and ideals. Recently, I signed a Change.org petition started by a doctor who has been on the front lines of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Syria, calling for world leaders not to forget the carnage and chaos in places like Aleppo. If you feel similarly about this issue, I invite you to join me.'

ARTICLE: FACEBOOK'S MARK ZUCKERBERG: IS THIS GOING TO DESTROY THE COMPANY? IF NOT, LET THEM TEST IT. "

When it comes to launching your product, imperfect is perfect. Sometimes, the most important question you can ask isn't, Is this good enough? Rather, you can emulate Facebook Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg and ask, Is this going to destroy the company? If not, then let them test it!"

Thats just one of the many counter-intuitive, genius-level lessons Mark casually provides in todays episode of the Masters of Scale podcast (released the day before Mark gives his first Harvard commencement speech). I sat down with Mark for a rare 90-minute interview and I learned a few things I never knew about him from the first social network he ever launched (that would be ZuckNet), to the long bus ride from school that started him thinking about online social behavior, to one of his proudest accomplishments (the testing framework that lets Facebook keep innovating).'

Ive long believed that if you're not embarrassed by your first product release, you've released too late. This is one of the secrets behind successful blitzscaling, and Mark embodies this approach. He explains how theyre able to run 10,000 versions of Facebook at any given time, and surprise guest Sheryl Sandberg explains why when a summer intern accidentally crashed the entire Facebook website for half an hour they hired him, instead of firing him (That intern certainly lived up to Facebook's original mantra of "move fast and break things").'

Id love to hear your own experiences of moving fast and breaking things. What embarrassing early effort allowed you to succeed in the long run?'

Please write a short post on LinkedIn to engage the wider community. Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me (@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale. The producers of the show and I will be on the lookout for the best examples to feature in the future!'

P.S. Congratulations to Mark and the Harvard class of 2017. Enjoy commencement on Thursday!'

ARTICLE: WHAT BAD IDEA LED TO YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS?'

The best business ideas often appear laughable at first glance. Google, Facebook,Airbnbthey all sounded crazy, before they blitzscaled into spectacular successes! Inthe latest episode of the Masters of Scale podcast, The Beauty of a Bad Idea, weexplore why getting laughed out of the room by potential investors might actually be agood sign for your startup, and whycounterintuitivelyI'm filled with dread when Ibring a company to my partners at Greylock, and they all say, That's a great idea!"

You'll also learn the one question you have to be able to answer if you're going tosucceed in the face of rejection, and the one thing that convinced me I was the rightperson to start LinkedIn."

Its a fast-paced episode, full of provocative ideas and funny moments, featuringentrepreneurs like Bevel's Tristan Walker, Hint Water's Kara Goldin and The MusesKathryn Minshew. Not to mention two successful venture capitalists, David Hornikand Josh Kopelman. It will make you think twice before you conclude an idea is bad."

For this weeks episode, Id like to run a little experiment.'

My theory is that many a great entrepreneurs journey begins with hearing No.'

Id love to hear from you. What bad idea led to your greatest success?'

Please write a short post on your LinkedIn newsfeed to engage the wider community.Tag your post #mastersofscale so I can find it. And if youd like, Tweet it at me(@ReidHoffman) and @MastersOfScale. I and the producers of the show will be onthe lookout for the best examples to feature in the future!'

By the way, LinkedIn and Twitter? Those were initially considered bad ideas too.'

ARTICLE: BLITZCAPITAL SOMETIMES CRAZY, SOMETIMES ESSENTIAL TO GREAT TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSES'

Tim O'Reilly wrote a great response to the most recent episode of Masters of Scale, The Money Episode. Tim's LinkedIn Influencer post, Some Businesses Bleed Black, adds nuance and complexity to the philosophy that startups should raise more money than they think they need."

As Tim points out, there is definitely a continuum between the all-out growth of blitzscaling, and the stability of a lifestyle business. Tim is absolutely right that there are great businesses that discover a great revenue source, and can use customers to fund their growth. There are also great businesses that do raise outside funding, but whose revenue model enables them to achieve massive scale without ever raising the large amounts of capital that are typically required for blitzscaling. But do these exceptions invalidate my theory? In a word, no.'

Tim's preferred strategy of focusing on sustainable cash flow and growing at the rate that customers are willing to fund with their purchases is generally a good approach, but it isn't universal, especially when it comes to technology companies."

Many technology businesses exist in winner-take-most or winner-take-all markets, where the first company to achieve critical scale wins a massive long-term advantage. Furthermore, many of these markets include well-funded competitors; if you focus on sustainable growth, you might be highly efficient in the short term, but if your inefficient and free-spending competitors beat you to critical mass, you'll still be dead in the long term. In these markets, time really is your enemy, not your ally."

When Rocket Internet decided to spend a hundred million dollars trying to beat Airbnb to scale in Europe, the right play for Brian Chesky wasn't to focus on profitable growth; it was to raise money and grow faster than his rival."

One of the key elements of my upcoming book on blitzscaling is a set of guidelines to help you assess when it makes sense to prioritize speed to growth over efficiency, and when it makes sense to prioritize efficiency over speed.'

If, like Tim, you're working in an industry without venture capitalists to provide your competitors with a blitzscaling war chest, or if you're one of the rare companies like Google that has a business model so profitable that it supports explosive growth, funding your growth from revenues may very well be the right choice. Of course one of the main reasons Google was able to pursue the course it did was that by the time it launched, most smart people believed that that search engines weren't an good business, and so it was able to grow without focused competition. People were so down on search that in 2002, Yahoo, which should have been Google's biggest rival, signed a deal to outsource its search to Google! These aren't common circumstances."

Just look at the list of major bootstrapped technology companies that Tim cites in his postdo you know what they also all have in common? None of them were started in Silicon Valley. Microsoft (Albuquerque, 1972), Bloomberg (New York, 1983), ESRI (Redlands, 1969), Epic Systems (Madison, 1979), SAS (North Carolina, 1976), and Dell (Austin, 1984) all had the space to grow without blitzscaling competitors (and Bloomberg started with $10 million from Michael Bloomberg's personal fortune, and took a $30 million investment from Merrill Lynch)."

There are many more instances of successful technology businesses that have taken significant venture financing, than have not. Just in my own personal experience, PayPal, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Airbnb all benefited from raising significant amounts of capital. Most of today's other important technology companies did as well, including Apple, Amazon, Alibaba, Tencent, Oracle, Cisco, Intel, Salesforce.com, Workday, and many more."

Tim is both a good friend and a savvy businessman. Of course he's right that there's entire categories of businesses that don't need to raise blitzscaling capital, and even some great technology companies that succeeded without it. But if you over-index on those exceptions and decide you shouldn't raise money, you would have missed out on the majority of multi-billion-dollar successes, especially in Silicon Valley."

As always, key decisions about building great businesses involve judgment. In blitzscaling, the judgments are challenging: significant deployment of capital, vision-blurring speed, unresolvable risks, and short-fused decisions in time. Some of the challenging questions that you must ask:'

* * *'

If you have experiences or thoughts on this dialogue between Tim and me, please share! Comment below, or share on LinkedIn / Facebook / Twitter using #mastersofscale.'

You can listen to the episode Tim wrote about, as well as many others, and subscribe to my podcast at https://mastersofscale.com/.'

ARTICLE: WHY YOU NEED TO RAISE MORE MONEY THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED'

Entrepreneurs should always raise more money than they need, so they can plan for the unforeseeable. That includes anything from a stock market crash or outlandish expenses to an opportunity you couldnt predict in a market that didnt exist when you started out.'

This week's episode of Masters of Scale the new audio series I host focuses on the complicated and messy relationship between raising money and managing risk. Raising more money than you think you need so you can blitzscale your businesssacrificing efficiency in favor of speedcan feel risky and uncomfortable. But it many cases, it gives you the best chance to succeed."

As you listen to the episode, Id love to hear how the stories and ideas map against your own. Have you faced down unexpected, outlandish expenses? Weathered a brutal economic downturn? Happened on your real business model a bit late in the game? Did you raise too much or too little money? Share your own tales of scale here on LinkedIn, or elsewhere on social, and share them with us using #MastersofScale so we're sure to see them."

In the conversation I had with my friend, successful serial entrepreneur Mariam Naficy of Eve.com and Minted, you'll hear about how she pursued both extremes of fundraising. During the dot com boom, she raised $26 million for Eve.com so that she could outspend her competition. Listen to this audio clip to hear the beginning of her toughest negotiation (It will make you laugh):"

For her second startup, Minted, the crowdsourced marketplace for designers, she deliberately set out to start a small, stable lifestyle business with a little money from her friends. What she discovered along the way was the risk of being conservative (Fast forward: Minted is now a 9-figure revenue company with 350 employees. Not exactly a lifestyle business)'

As a venture capitalist at Greylock Partners, I look for founders who will take on huge risk to succeed, but who also understand the importance of managing those risks intelligently. You have to anticipate and prepare for repeated failure in order to succeed. I'm backed up in this philosophy by Nobel Prize-winner Daniel Kahneman, who joins the podcast to share his and Amos Tversky's concept of the planning fallacy."

According to Kahneman, most plans fail, and most projects experience cost overruns. But even if you don't know what's going to cause that cost overrun, you can still use analysis to project its likely size and plan accordingly. Or, you could just follow Mariam's rule of thumb, and Act like you've got half as much money."

Starting a company is like jumping off a cliff and assembling an airplane on the way down; if you run out of money for the fuel and parts you need to get airborne, no one will care how efficiently you spent it along the way!'

Listen to the second episode of Masters of Scale, The Money Episode, and then share your own tales of scale with us via a status update or an article of your own on LinkedIn using #MastersOfScale.'

ARTICLE: WHAT'S THE SECRET OF SILICON VALLEY? HINT: IT'S NOT JUST STARTUPS"

The first episode of the Masters of Scale podcast -- Hand Crafted featuring Airbnb Co-Founder and CEO Brian Chesky launches today, and the remaining episodes will be released weekly. I'm proud of this podcast; I think youll find that it doesnt sound like any business podcast youve ever heard. You can subscribe via Apple Podcasts, Stitcher and Google Play."

My friend June Cohen and I decided to make Masters of Scale because there arent many people who know how to scale up effectively, and there are very few places where you can learn how to build great companies of great scale.'

If you ask the average person to explain Silicon Valley's success, the answer youre likely to hear is: startups. But in my view, the real answer is scaleups that is, companies with world-changing impact that have revenue in the billions and users in the tens of millions. Explaining the success of Silicon Valley by saying that the region is good at starting companies is deceptively incomplete in two important ways."

First, only a tiny fraction of the worlds startups originate in Silicon Valley, and this fraction has been getting smaller as startup knowledge spreads around the globe. Thanks to the internet, entrepreneurs everywhere have access to techniques like The Lean Startup, rather than relying purely on trial-and-error or informal peer advice. And as other markets have matured, rather than immigrating to Silicon Valley to start companies, smart founders are electing to start companies in their home countries all across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and South America.'

Second, simply starting a company is necessary but insufficient. To be a home to transformative companies with world-changing impact, a region has to allow startups to grow up into scaleups. Consider that there are total of 13 publicly-traded technology companies in the world that have a market capitalization of more than $100 billion. Of these, six are in Silicon Valley (Apple, Alphabet, Facebook, Intel, Oracle, and Cisco). These companies have transformed our daily lives, from communications to media to how we connect with each other. Silicon Valley certainly doesn't account for 46% of the world's startups, yet that same proportion of the most important technology companies come from and are a part of Silicon Valley."

The Masters of Scale podcast builds on the theories shared in the 2015 Stanford class I taught with John Lilly from Greylock Partners, LinkedIn co-founder Allen Blue, and my co-author Chris Yeh about extremely rapid scaling a practice for which we coined the term, blitzscaling. (You can view the classes online at the Greylock Partners YouTube channel, or listen to them as a Greylock podcast.)'

The extreme growth of blitzscaling, which, when combined with an innovative business model, can generate massive value and long-term competitive advantage. Often, the source of this competitive advantage comes from the network effects built into the business model, where the first company to achieve critical scale triggers a feedback loop that allows it dominate a winner-take-most or winner-take-all market.'

The kind of growth involved in blitzscaling (tripling in headcount each year isnt uncommon) requires a radically different approach to management than that of a typical growth company (which would be happy to grow 15% per year). Companies that blitzscale have to rapidly navigate a set of key transitions as their organizations grow, and have to embrace counterintuitive rules like launching flawed and broken products or ignoring angry customers.'

Masters of Scale is a guide on how to build and scale incredible organizations, based on the experiences of the masters of scale who have actually done it, all served up with a mix of music, humor, and storytelling.'

Each of the 10 episodes focuses on a specific scaling theme, and features the wisdom of a particular master like Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg or Reed Hastings from Netflix along with my additional thoughts and reflections, and cameo appearances by other experts ranging from Nobel Prize-winner Daniel Kahneman to a local wine shop owner. You'll join me on an intellectual journey as my guests and I explore the hard-won lessons we've learned over the past two decades of scaling amazing companies."

In addition to the 10 thematic episodes, we'll also be releasing full one-on-one interviews with all the masters of scale. We were lucky enough to have dozens of people share their insights about scaling. In addition to my partners at Greylock including Josh Elman, John Lilly, and Jerry Chen, some of the people featured in the podcast include:"

Masters of Scale will provide useful knowledge and concrete suggestions to people throughout the scaling journey. Whether you're a leader or manager who is trying to rapidly scale a business or business unit, or whether you simply want to better understand the dynamics behind companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon, which now impact every aspect of our daily lives, this podcast will give you a peek behind the curtain at the real thoughts and experiences of the masters of scale who are shaping today's world."

I've learned a lot in the course of creating these stories. For example, I've known my friend, Netflix co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings, for many yearsand not just because of our eerily similar names. Yet when we sat down for this podcast, I learned that one of his key management practices is to hold offsite Start / Stop / Continue dinners with his team. These are special opportunities for his key people to give each other honest and concrete feedback in an informal setting. As their name indicates, these dinners focus on giving each other truthful feedback about actions and activities you'd like others to start doing, stop doing, or continue doing. It's a fantastic idea, and is far superior to the typical practice of evaluating people's performance as part of an traditional, ratings-based annual review. That's just one of the many powerful techniques that I learned (and you will learn) as part of Masters of Scale."

I am thrilled to be working with June, her co-founder Deron Triff, and the rest of the WaitWhat team on producing Masters of Scale. June and Deron are probably the world's leading experts on spreading ideas. June was the driving force behind turning TED Talks from a set of speeches given at a single conference into one of the world's premier media properties. Her Co-Founder Deron led TEDs international expansion and media extensions, launching TED Radio Hour and building views/listens to 1 billion/year. They recently started WaitWhat to produce content that sparks your curiosity and changes your understanding of the world. So when June proposed that we collaborate on a podcast series about the secrets of scaling, I jumped at the opportunity."

Masters of Scale is the first of several projects I'm working on to spread these ideas. In addition to the podcast and the Stanford class, Chris Yeh and I are also working on a new book, Blitzscaling, which will be published in the Fall of 2018. If you're interested in learning about blitzscaling and scaleups, visit blitzscaling.com to sign up for the Blitzscaling newsletter and pre-order the upcoming book."

ARTICLE: END HUNGER IN SILICON VALLEY WITH SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK'

In Silicon Valley, the biggest financial rewards go to innovative, often contrarian ideas that scale globally. So entrepreneurs don't just look for opportunities to create something radically new. They also look for opportunities that can impact hundreds of millions of people."

This mindset has brought us Google, Amazon, Facebook, Airbnb, Uber, smartphones, and countless other technologies and services that have substantially improved our lives in just the last 20 years.'

This mindset also extends beyond for-profit ventures. When Silicon Valley technologists and entrepreneurs engage in philanthropy, they often look for impact on a global scale.'

Over the last few years, I've engaged in such efforts myself. For example, I support Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan's BioHub initiative, which aims to cure all diseases over the next 80 to 100 years. I support Opportunity@Work, a non-profit that is working to "re-wire the U.S. labor market" by creating effective pathways to high-tech careers, especially for women, minorities, and others who've been traditionally underrepresented in the industry.'

Kiva.org, a global microfinance platform, and Crisis Textline, which offers counseling via smartphone to individuals in crisis, are two other technologically driven non-profits I support that have scaled rapidly and impact millions of users.'

But as useful as it can be to pursue philanthropic moonshots and disruptions, it's also true that not every challenge we face needs a major technological breakthrough to effectively address."

One obvious example of this is the issue of hunger and food security in the U.S.A. When young children don't have reliable access to high-quality, nutritious food, research shows that they get sick more often. They have less energy for complex social interactions, and less capacity to adapt to environmental stresses, all of which ends up impacting their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. According to a report called Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation, adults who "experienced hunger as children create a workforce pool that is less competitive, with lower levels of educational and technical skills, and seriously constrained human capital.

Thus, ensuring that every member of a community has reliable access to high-quality food has compounding positive impact. In the short term, it helps alleviate the immediate issues of hunger and nutrition. But it's also a long-term intervention that can boost the effectiveness of a wide range of other philanthropic programs that address education, skills acquisition, career training, and more."

In the United States, we produce food so efficiently now that some estimates suggest we actually waste as much as $165 billion in food each year. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean everyone in the U.S. has reliable access to nutritious and affordable food far from it. "

According to a recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 15.8 million U.S. households were "food insecure" in 2015 meaning that at some point during the year they "lacked access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members." Approximately 3 million of these households included children.'

In Santa Clara County, where the tech boom has helped push the median household income to $93,000, food security is still an issue. Indeed, Silicon Valley's success has increased the cost of living for everyone in the region, and that means many residents experience food insecurity. According to the Second Harvest Food Bank, which serves Santa Clara County and San Mateo County, it is providing more meals now to local residents than it was at the height of the recession. "

Second Harvest currently provides food to approximately 253,000 people each month, a third of whom are children under the age of 18. Seniors on fixed incomes also struggle to make ends meet in the region.'

Helping Second Harvest increase access to nutritious food is simple but crucial way to have real and immediate impact in our community. That's why I'm co-chairing Second Harvest's Stand Up For Kids campaign with Sheryl Sandberg and John and Eileen Donahoe."

During a recent visit to a Second Harvest food pantry that operates out of an elementary school in East Palo Alto, I saw how many members of our community benefit from Second Harvest's work. Twice a month, more than 1250 clients depend on the fresh produce and other nutritious food staples that volunteers distribute there."

In the 42 years that Second Harvest has been serving Silicon Valley, it has grown into one of the country's largest food banks, leveraging a network of more than 300 other local organizations and 850 sites to distribute 54 million meals per year. Volunteers contribute more than 300,000 hours of service. Food donors provide over 50 million pounds of food, including approximately 41 million pounds that would have otherwise gone to waste. "

But financial contributions most of which come from individual donors are a crucial component of its efforts. While Second Harvest relies on large-scale food donations from distributors, farmers, and other sources, it still must purchase approximately 25 percent of the food it donates each year.'

In addition, there are costs associated with maintaining a safe and efficient distribution and storage network a must when handling the kind of nutritious but highly perishable foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables, chicken, milk, and eggs -- that are the basis of a healthy diet.'

Because of its mission and scale, Second Harvest is able to negotiate deals with food vendors at very favorable rates. It also operates with extraordinary efficiency. 95 cents of every dollar it receives is applied to food distribution, and only five cents goes to salaries, fundraising, and other operating costs. Any donation that you make, in other words, is converted almost entirely into food that helps community members live healthier, more fulfilling lives.'

While Second Harvest's data-driven decision-making and iterative process improvement appeal to the Silicon Valley entrepreneur in me, my commitment to the organization ultimately goes deeper than that. As much as I work to achieve impact on a global scale, I'm also part of a local community that includes many different facets beyond the tech industry."

And food, of course, is not just a basic human requirement, but also one of the most central ways that people connect. For more than 40 years, Second Harvest has been improving our region's health and resilience, helping individuals obtain the nutrition that will give them best shot at attaining long-term positive outcomes, and strengthening that sense of connectedness that every community must possess to reach its full potential. It's a privilege to help Second Harvest in its indispensable mission, and I strongly encourage others to support it as well."

ARTICLE: IF THERE AREN'T ANY TYPOS IN THIS ESSAY, WE LAUNCHED TOO LATE! "

In my early years as an entrepreneur, the world was still largely ruled by scarcity. Products required raw materials to produce. Distribution was expensive and logistically complex to achieve. That led to a mindset of prudence and precision expressed in aphorisms that still carry a great deal of weight today.'

You only get one chance to make a first impression.'

Measure twice, cut once.'

In a world ruled by gatekeepers and beholden to physics, this attitude made sense. Space on retail shelves was finite. Creating the machines and processes it took to produce products at a scale that made them affordable to mass markets was expensive and time-consuming. Through the mid-1990s, even with something as virtual as software code, this was true. In those days, software was not so much eating the world as adding to it. Shipping Microsoft Word or CorelDraw required even more atoms than shipping a novel or a record album. Software products came on disks, in boxes, with thick user manuals. They were costly to store, ship, and merchandise.'

In this world, where getting the latest version of your favorite spreadsheet program necessitated a trip to the mall and a significant cash outlay, it made sense to put significant effort into getting things right from the start. If you didn't, users could rightly insist that you harmed them. You cost them time. You cost them money. The loss of trust that a less-than-ideal interaction created could last for years. Or maybe even forever."

Now, everything's different. Software doesn't come in boxes anymore. Laptops don't even have disk drives. "

Whether it's through search, social sharing, or virality, it is now much easier and less expensive to reach potential users. Users, in turn, no longer have to pay hundreds of dollars to try a new app or service. This new world marginalizes the cost of second impressions, third impressions, and even tenth impressions. As a result, the value of getting it right the first time has plummeted. And a new batch of aphorisms has emerged to crystallize the new ethos. "

Move fast and break things. '

Fail fast.'

If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late."

The latter is one I coined myself, more than a decade ago. '

While the point of an aphorism is to convey a rule or advice in a crisp, standalone way, I continue to get questions from people about it. Some challenge its assumptions. Others simply want more elaboration.'

There were three distinct themes informing this statement. The first and most explicit one is the importance of speed: You should aim to launch fast.'

The second, less apparent theme, is that your assumptions about your customers, and how they'll use your product, won't be entirely correct. Eventually, you'll probably be embarrassed by how many wrong assumptions you made."

The third theme is that you lose out by delaying the onset of the customer feedback loop: If you'd launched sooner, you would have started learning sooner. Instead, you launched too late. The word "embarrassed" plays a key role here.'

Some people may interpret my aphorism's emphasis on speed as permission to cut corners, act recklessly, or proceed without a clear plan. But I didn't write "If you're not indicted by the first version of your product, you've launched too late." '

Nor did I write "If you're not deeply ashamed by the first version of your product.

Indeed, if you launched so fast that your product generates lawsuits, alienates users, or burns through capital or other resources without any apparent gain, you did in fact launch too soon! But what if all that happens is that the user says, "Well, that was lame.

Sure, you might be a little embarrassed, but that's not a bad thing, as long as you're moving fast, learning fast, and improving your product."

Even in our new world, many entrepreneurs still identify so closely with their products or services they cannot bring themselves to adopt a mindset that prioritizes iteration and learning over perfection. As an entrepreneur, you often base your whole sense of identity and self-worth on your "baby" and that almost guarantees a sense of driven perfectionism. You believe that you are going to be judged on your product or even equated with it so you want everything to be exactly right upon the initial unveiling.'

In reality, you should be moving faster than that. '

If you're willing to be embarrassed, you gain speed and flexibility. You get to market faster when you're not trying to anticipate and design every feature and potential use case. That means you also start collecting feedback from users faster, and learn about what happens in instances you didn't or couldnt anticipate."

In the end, entrepreneurs shouldn't be so focused on what happens on the first day of launching a product. The relevant timeframe you should be thinking about is the first month, then the first year."

Also, as Eric Ries once suggested to me, there's "a secret corollary" to my aphorism. Namely, that "no matter how long you wait to release your first version, you will be embarrassed by it." In other words, even if you blow deadlines and exceed budgets in an obsessive effort to achieve perfection at launch, you're still going to be embarrassed by your first version anyway! It's inevitable, because it's impossible to exactly foresee whose going to use your product, toward what ends, under what conditions. '

For example, in the early days of PayPal, we thought that allowing users to "beam" money to each other using their Palm Pilots so they could split a lunch check, say would be our defining feature. In fact, we ended up launching late because we put so much energy into building this functionality. As it turned out, though, what users really wanted was a way to exchange money using email, to facilitate their eBay transactions.'

In the case of LinkedIn, our founding team had a lot of debates about whether we could launch without a feature we'd dubbed "Contact Finder.

"Contact Finder" was conceived as a messaging service that would propagate through your contacts list. You'd send out a message saying you were looking to hire a front-end developer or a marketing writer, and your contact would forward the message to their contacts. Eventually, a front-end developer or marketing writer would see it and then connect with you. In early 2003, there was great concern amongst our team that without this feature, people wouldn't truly know how to use LinkedIn. But there were other factors in play that made it desirable to launch sooner rather than later. '

We had to think very hard about what constituted an acceptable first experience with the site. We knew users would be able to send invitations to people they knew. We knew they'd be able to do basic search and communicate with others. "

"Contact Finder" didn't exist yet, but ultimately we decided it was more important to launch sooner than it was to have that specific functionality from the first day. And we were right. In fact, 14 years later, we still haven't introduced "Contact Finder"!'

By launching without it, we were able to start a dialogue with our users that much faster, and start learning from them. And while our team might have felt more confident had we launched with every bell and whistle we'd envisioned, the truth was that what we did launch with was enough. Our feature set was incomplete, but it wasn't so barebones or so flawed that it created a negative impression. Instead, there was enough there to get users to engage with the platform, and that's all we needed."

Once they were engaged, we started getting feedback and iterating.'

That is the ultimate goal of my aphorism: To encourage a culture of flexible persistence and iterative improvement. For that, a little embarrassment in those first few weeks after lunch is a small price to pay.'

'

Note: Anyone is welcome to republish this essay'

ARTICLE: THE MIT MEDIA LAB DISOBEDIENCE AWARD: RECOGNIZING REBELS WITH A CAUSE '

Progress comes from innovation, and innovation happens when inventors, entrepreneurs, activists, organizers, and others refuse to accept the status quo. Instead, they pursue new paths and new solutions and sometimes bend or even break the rules in the process. '

This dynamic is what inspires the MIT Media Las Disobedience Award. Announced in July 2016 at the Media Las Forbidden Research event, the Disobedience Award is now officially accepting nominations for a cash award of $250,000. Nominations can be submitted through May 1. A recipient will be announced on July 21, 2017."

The intent of the Disobedience Award is to recognize and support the efforts of an individual or an organization that has engaged in ethical disobedience to authority, in ways that have positive social impact. It rewards courage, justice, and principled civic engagement along with ingenuity and risk-taking. Just as importantly, it does not reward or condone reckless or dangerous behavior, or violence of any kind. For potential nominees engaged in scientific research, proper scientific method and correct attention to safeguards must be top priorities. '

The Disobedience Award is a global prize open to individuals and organizations working in all fields, including science, medicine, human rights, politics, civics, law, journalism, and technology (nominations must come from third parties, not the individuals or organizations themselves). '

The winner will be chosen by a multidisciplinary panel led by MIT Media Lab Director Joi Ito. I was one of many who helped Joi conceptualize the award during the design process, and after many conversations, decided to provide the seed funding for the first prize. Because an independent judging process is important, I won't be participating in the judging process myself."

The Disobedience Award is not intended to promote disobedience itself, but rather disobedience as a principled means toward achieving significant positive social impact. Its goal is to recognize an individual or group that has put itself at risk of persecution during ethical and responsible efforts to correct injustice or otherwise achieve a greater social good.'

To a large degree, you can assess a country's civic health and economic dynamism by how open it is, on a systemic level, to upstarts and challengers. Throughout its history, the United States has flourished because of its emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurism, and the space it gives individuals and organizations to challengeincumbents and the status quo. This aspect of our country has catalyzed both prosperity and justice, and it's a part of our national history and character that should make every American proud."

In the realm of entrepreneurship, almost every great triumph has its roots in disobedience or contrarianism of one kind or another. And ultimately this impulse doesn't just create new products and companies, but also new industries, new institutions, and ultimately new cultural norms and expectations."

And of course disobedience also functions as generative force in science, civics, and politics. Galileo's disobedience in the face of church doctrine helped usher in the age of modern science. Susan B. Anthony was arrested, tried, and convicted for voting illegally in the U.S. federal election in 1872 and helped pave the way for the 19th Amendment. Gandhi suffered beatings and imprisonment while popularizing the tactic of peaceful non-cooperation in the pursuit of self-rule. Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King recognized civil disobedience as the most effective way to highlight the injustice of segregation and initiate positive social change."

Upstarts and iconoclasts bring new ideas, new values, and new approaches into play. They compel incumbents to evolve and grow. As G.K. Chesterton wrote in Orthodoxy, "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead." '

Ethical and responsible disobedience helps create democracy for the living, and even more importantly, for future generations. It inoculates the polis against complacence, rent-seeking, and all forms of incumbentism. It keeps our culture dynamic and adaptive.'

That's why it's so important to encourage and formally recognize it. While it may seem counterintuitive to host a prize honoring disobedience at one of the country's most venerable institutions, the MIT Media Lab is actually the perfect home for the Disobedience Award. Combining academic rigor with applied research, the Las multi-disciplinary staff and students experiment with new technologies and unconventional approaches in pursuit of paradigm-shifting tools and applications that can have significant impact."

It's an institution that prioritizes methodical but untethered experimentation, where researchers with widely varying areas of expertise are encouraged to collaborate and improvise in ways that become not just multi-disciplinary but antidisciplinary disobedient."

The Disobedience Award, in turn, embodies and extends these values in a global way. In America and all over the world, in the realms of science, politics, business, and culture, there are traditions, orthodoxies, and incumbents that should be challenged. And the people and organizations willing to take on that risk in the pursuit of progress deserve recognition and support.'

This first iteration of the Disobedience Award is an experiment itself. If it goes well, both in terms of the selection process and the impact the prize has, our goal is to repeat it. In time, I can imagine the Disobedience Award expanding so that each year, there might be one for science, one for politics, one for the arts, etc. '

Similarly, the Award could broaden to include collaborations with more universities. It offers a focused but effective way for institutions to reinforce their own internal commitment to and capacity for principled disobedience while simultaneously providing a way to promote this value in the wider world.'

Or perhaps it will evolve in some entirely different way. '

I'm supporting this effort in part because Joi himself embodies the values the Disobedience Award is designed to promote. A two-time college dropout who never stopped being a student and now leads a research lab at one of the world's leading universities, Joi has successfully challenged conventions as an entrepreneur and investor, an activist, and an educator. Over the arc of his career, his own thoughtful and systematic cultivation of a disobedient mindset has consistently helped him identify new opportunities to make the world we live in more democratic, more just, and more prosperous for us all."

With the Disobedience Award under Joi's stewardship, I expect that we will be surprised, challenged, and inspired, and that we will learn something useful. "

Nominations close May 1. While some freethinkers may see this as an opportunity to break the rules and submit nominations after that date, such tactics will prove fruitless. The goal here isn't to honor arbitrary or merely clever acts of disobedience, or disobedience as a cover for unpreparedness. The goal is to honor disobedience within a larger framework of principled engagement, disobedience that is deployed ethically and strategically in pursuit of a greater social good. Thus, the May 1 deadline will be strictly enforced!"

'

'

ARTICLE: THE MISSION CONTINUES: JOINING THE MICROSOFT BOARD'

Theres a delightful symmetry in using my Microsoft Surface Studio to update my LinkedIn profile and post this note.Effective today, I'm joining Microsoft's Board of Directors."

Ever since my co-founders and I started LinkedIn in 2003, the company's mission has been to create new opportunities for every member of the global workforce, and thus boost the economic productivity of these individuals and the companies they work for."

Microsoft, in turn, helps individuals and organizations leverage the power of the professional cloud, transforming how they work through key productivity platforms of data analytics, security, and group collaboration.'

So when the deal between LinkedIn and Microsoft was announced in June 2016, I and others noted how the combination would unite two companies that already share a core mission of making individuals and organizations more productive.'

LinkedIn had been pursuing that mission through individual identity and the professional network, Microsoft through the professional cloud.'

The way the two companies' assets can amplify each other is powerful, and that's why we made the deal."

The reasons the merger made sense in general are also why Im joining Microsoft's board. From this position, I will continue to focus on helping LinkedIn fulfill its mission of increasing the economic productivity of individual professionals and the companies they work for. I'll also contribute more broadly as Microsoft deepens its presence in Silicon Valley and continues to weave social, AI, and other technologies into it products."

Before the acquisition, I had been serving as Chairman of LinkedIns Board; I hadn't actually been an employee since 2009, after I hired Jeff Weiner as CEO. With the sale to Microsoft, LinkedIn obviously no longer has a board. While my goal had always been to continue to serve LinkedIn's long-standing mission in a hands-on way, we needed to determine the best possible way to do that. After the acquisition was finalized in December, I began having more detailed conversations with Satya Nadella, Bill Gates, Microsoft Chairman John W. Thompson, Jeff Weiner, and others on the role I could play. Ultimately, we concluded that a position on Microsofts Board would be the best way to leverage my contributions. It's an opportunity I'm honored to take on."

While my primary job is Partner at the venture capital firm Greylock, I've maintained an office next to Jeff Weiner's at LinkedIn for the last nine years."

I spend substantial time there throughout the week, and that will continue. And just as I participated in a material way in the development of key LinkedIn initiatives such as LinkedIn China, our ProFinder professional services platform, and the acquisition and strategic development of our educational platform, Lynda.com, I will play an ongoing and comprehensive role in LinkedIn as it continues to grow. Im also looking forward to getting to know employees who have been doing important work at Microsoft and, in particular, working closely with Satya whos done a terrific job in his first 3 years as CEO.'

In the face of issues like automation, the skills gap, shifting educational and career patterns, and socio-economic stratification, LinkedIn has never been more relevant. 467 million global users depend on our platform for career development and economic empowerment. '

And following the combination with Microsoft, LinkedIn now has new resources and technology assets to deploy as it moves forward. Imagine a Cortana-like intelligent assistant helping you determine which third-degree connections make the most sense for you to pursue. Or LinkedIn Learning courseware that incorporates Microsoft's HoloLens mixed reality technology for more immersive learning experiences."

These are the kinds of ideas we can begin to pursue as LinkedIn grows into an increasingly indispensable platform for navigating professional life in the 21st century. I look forward to working closely with Satya, Jeff, my new fellow Microsoft board members, and all my longstanding talented colleagues at LinkedIn as we all work together to connect the world's professionals and organizations in ways that improve economic opportunities on an individual level and at scale."

Its a humbling opportunity to join the team at Microsoft as a board member, which empowers so many peoples lives and productivity around the world.'

ARTICLE: NICK DIRKS' EFFORTS TO BRING CHANGE TO UC BERKELEY"

Over the holidays, I had a chance to reflect on 2016 and everything that occurred during it. Obviously, this included major geopolitical events like the U.S. election and Brexit. But I also spent some time reflecting on events taking place closer to home, including an unfortunate situation involving one of the country's most important institutions of higher learning UC Berkeley. "

My paternal grandparents went to Cal. My parents went to Cal. I grew up in Berkeley, so I've always had a strong connection to the University of California. A few years ago, when I started getting email invitations to meet with UC Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas Dirks, I assumed it was because of this family history. "

As the institution's newly appointed Chancellor, Dirks had assumed the responsibility of turning around a 144-year-old institution with an ongoing structural deficit challenge in the face of significantly reduced state funding. That, I assumed, was why I was getting those emails. The school was looking for new donors."

But while many of my family members are loyal Cal grads, I went to Stanford and Oxford. Thus, those were the first higher-education institutions I had decided to support. In addition to those, I had also supported MIT and Harvard. So I wasn't actively looking for another philanthropic opportunity in this domain, and I never responded to those UC Berkeley emails. "

Then, I happened to meet Nick at an event in Montana. We had an illuminating conversation about how to modernize the public university and keep it relevant in an era of rapid technological change and shifting work and career patterns.'

Having read my book The Start-up of You, Nick was eager to discuss the ways in which entrepreneurial thinking and networks could positively impact UC Berkeley students and graduates. '

That initial conversation blossomed into a rich, ongoing dialog. We talked about how UC Berkeley could use technology to make courseware more effective and streamline administrative processes. We discussed how the school could create more two-way connections to alumni, and how the school's various centers for research could tap into Silicon Valley and its ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation. "

In short, Nick recognized how technology was transforming how and why people access higher education, and thus what they expect from universities. His task was to inject new thinking into an organization with deeply entrenched traditions and escalating sustainability issues. Instead of assuming he and his colleagues had all the answers, he was looking for input from outside sources, people operating in entirely different domains.'

Nick's vision and ambition were inspiring. He wasn't interested in simply preserving the status quo amidst changing funding conditions. He wanted to make UC Berkeley sustainable and actually increase its importance in the local community and the world at large."

To do this, he forged stronger ties with UCSF and Stanford through joint efforts like the Innovative Genomics Initiative and the Chan Zuckerberg Institute Biohub. He enhanced UC Berkeley's global footprint through new alliances and relationships with universities in Asia and Europe. He launched an ambitious initiative to revamp the undergraduate experience life at Cal, with a more interdisciplinary curriculum and improved physical spaces. He created a new division of Data Science for research as well as teaching, and also launched a new Arts + Design Initiative that facilitates increased collaboration across departments, faculty, students, and other university resources that specialize in these areas."

And by pursuing stronger ties with alumni and other allies, he boosted Berkeley's fundraising results to new levels, setting a record in 2016 for both the total number of donations and the amount raised -- $480 million. In fact, because of outreach efforts from Nick and another friend of Berkeley, my wife Michelle and I decided to support the Arts + Design Initiative."

As a public university, UC Berkeley faces an ongoing structural challenge. Like all of the campuses in the University of California system, UC Berkeley is governed by state regulations that determine what tuition it can charge, the number of in-state students it must admit, and various other factors that impact its ability to generate revenue and thus control its own financial destiny. '

At the same time, the financial support the state provides has dropped dramatically over the last several decades. As the Washington Post reported in early 2016, "just about 13 percent of Berkeleys operating revenue came from state appropriations in 2014-2015, down from roughly 50 percent in the 1980s.

To preserve UC Berkeley's status as the country's leading public university under such conditions is an enormous challenge. When Nick announced that the institution would have to streamline the budgets of academic programs and consolidate campus services, the resistance and criticism he got from UC Berkeley's faculty started to intensify. "

In this kind of climate, any administrative misstep becomes fodder for political opportunism, as different constituencies with different interests to protect look for points of strategic advantage. '

Earlier this year, Nick was criticized for not moving quickly enough or strongly enough in regard to two sexual harassment cases involving UCB faculty members. In another instance, he was blamed for the high cost of a fence the school was building around his campus residence in the wake of several security breaches. '

In the face of the significant challenges it faces, UC Berkeley needs a coordinated effort amongst its various constituencies, where all parties are committed to working together in a spirit of collaboration, compromise, and shared purpose.'

But the environment at Berkeley was growing increasingly fractious. While Nick remained committed to the success of the University, he also recognized that amidst significant budgetary challenges and imminent change it needed a leader who wasn't enmeshed in polarizing political battles. "

In August, Nick announced his intention to resign: UCB is currently looking for a new chancellor. '

I was sorry to see this development because, ultimately, I believe the curiosity and dynamism that Nick had brought to the job was exactly what UC Berkeley needs as it seeks to adapt to changing conditions. Indeed, I hope whoever succeeds him will bring a similar vision and energy to the challenge. For nearly 150 years, UC Berkeley has played a vital role in the progress and prosperity of California and the nation at large; it's a crucial asset that we must protect and re-vitalize. "

And of course I look forward to seeing Nick's next play, whether he continues to work at Berkeley or pursue new opportunities in Silicon Valley or elsewhere. There are myriad opportunities to re-tool higher education in ways that educate students more effectively and better prepare them for lifelong success and continued learning. In his role as UC Berkeley's Chancellor, Nick established himself as one of the most innovative and forward-thinking leaders in this space."

'

ARTICLE: OBAMACARE IS MORE THAN A SAFETY NET ITS A TRAMPOLINE'

While broad access to healthcare is a cornerstone of social justice, some critics have characterized the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as a form of socialism. Others emphasize the regulatory burden it places on small businesses, which under its terms must offer healthcare plans if they have 50 or more employees.'

But as Republicans work to repeal President Obama's landmark legislative effort to reform the American healthcare system while offering few concrete plans on how they will replace it, it's also worth noting a feature that most have overlooked how the ACA bolsters entrepreneurship, innovation, and risk-taking."

Prior to what came to be known as Obamacare, those who lacked access to employer-sponsored health coverage often had few viable options to purchase individual coverage. In many cases, individuals had pre-existing medical conditions that caused insurers to deny them policies or to exclude coverage for treatments related to their conditions a practice the ACA ended. In other cases, people might qualify for individual coverage but simply couldn't afford it."

In a pre-ACA environment, where viable healthcare coverage was tied so directly to employment, there was an obvious disincentive to start your own business or to pursue self-employment: you might have to forgo health insurance in order to do so for yourself and for your children and/or spouse.'

This risk caused many workers to stick with jobs that didnt match their talents or goals, primarily because they were uncertain how they'd maintain affordable healthcare if they left those jobs. This phenomenon, known as job lock, inhibited entrepreneurship, self-employment, or even switching companies and thus reduced the ways that individuals could pursue their highest calling."

Obamacare changed that dynamic, replacing job lock with greater economic autonomy and more opportunities for people to pursue the work they find most meaningful.'

It may seem paradoxical, but its true: while entrepreneurs and investors tend to champion the virtues of free markets unhampered by excessive regulation, they also favor stable and predictable environments in which to operate. This frees them to bear the many risks of bringing a new product or service into the world without also having to contend with corruption, lawlessness, or lightning strikes.'

Thus, for champions of innovation, one way to view government is not as an impediment to entrepreneurism and free enterprise, but rather as the platform that provides the stability and services that allow entrepreneurism to flourish at scale. The services it provides, like rule of law, public education, the creation and maintenance of energy utilities, communications systems, and transportation systems all help create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship.'

Obamacare is a key addition to this platform. Because of its provisions that make it much easier for individuals to obtain health insurance without having to do so through an employer, it increases the workforce's capacity for risk, mobility, and innovation in ways that I believe have a positive impact on our overall economy."

As Y Combinator founder Sam Altman pointed out in a blog post last week, many of the founders he's worked with have taken advantage of ACA coverage while launching their companies. Whether they were leaving old jobs and relocating cross-country, or forging ahead with startup plans even in the face of a pre-existing medical condition, the ACA gave them freedom and flexibility to take a chance. Secure healthcare coverage allowed these founders to create new enterprises that have led to jobs and opportunities for additional American workers and consumers."

But it is not just venture-backed founders whom the ACA enables in this manner. It's any American who chooses to work for themselves. According to a 2014 study by the Freelancers Union, approximately 54 million Americans are "independent workers" now. As the gig economy grows, this number is increasing. Some estimates suggest that more than 60 million people or 40 percent of the American workforce -- will be contingent workers by 2020.'

In other words, more access to alternatives beyond traditional employer-sponsored coverage is exactly what is needed now, and its exactly what the ACA provides.'

Because the ACA is still so new, there's not much specific data yet on its impact on entrepreneurism. But what we're seeing so far suggests that it does help individuals gain more control over their work lives and economic destinies."

According to a newly released U.S Treasury report, more than 1.4 million self-employed or small business owners obtained coverage through ACA marketplaces in 2014 - the first full year of ACA implementation and most recent year with available data.'

In addition, economist Dean Baker recently noted that the "number of self-employed is up by 890,000 or just over 6.0 percent" in the 3 years since December 2013, when major aspects of the ACA took effect.Moreover, he notes that the number of workers who choose voluntarily to work part-time has risen by 2.4 million in that same period -- presumably, Baker concludes, "because they no longer need to get insurance from their employer.

In other words, this data suggests less job lock and more freedom and choices.'

As with any new product or service, the ACA has bugs and we should continue to iterate on it, looking for opportunities to decrease costs and increase competition within the Marketplaces. But if the law is simply repealed without a credible plan to offer healthcare to over 20 million Americans who have coverage and protection through the ACA - including small business owners and self-employed workers - we'll regret the loss of workforce mobility and dynamism it has engendered."

By creating a path to healthcare that does not rely solely on a persons employer, the ACA helps create an environment where individual citizens have more capacity to adapt to changing market conditions, apply their creativity and energies to new businesses, and take intelligent risks that can improve their economic livelihoods.'

In this respect, the ACA provides not only a safety net but also a trampoline. If you want an economy in which every American can contribute to entrepreneurial dynamism and to the consistent job growth we've seen over the last 75 months, don't let Congress repeal the ACA. Call your representative now. Tell them that having access to the affordable healthcare that the ACA enables is vital to having an American economy that works."

ARTICLE: SYMBIOSIS WITH THE BIOHU

Today, my wife Michelle and I are announcing a $20 million commitment to support the work of the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub, a new laboratory space in San Francisco where researchers and clinical scientists from Stanford, UCSF, and UC Berkeley will pursue life science breakthroughs in a cutting-edge, collaborative environment.I will be joining the Biohub board.Software and technology can transform science as it has other industries; technology and tools applied to disease can lead to exponential increase in disease identification, prevention, and cure.'

Over the past few years, I've had many conversations with Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan about strategic ways to improve human welfare on a massive scale.We talk about the speed and leverage of technology, the magnification and realization of human potential, and lessons from Silicon Valley that may apply to helping the world."

Biohub is part of the larger Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, which aims to cure, prevent, or manage all diseases by the end of the 21st century. It applies key techniques that enable the great Silicon Valley companies.'

In deploying technology, early-career and established researchers alike will utilize high-tech tools and resources to power new and early research.Some of these tools will be expensive, but available here for collaborative work.Some of these tools will be custom-built, new, and unique. For example, Biohub researchers have started to develop an unprecedented Cell Atlas a computational database of cell types and data that researchers around the world will be able to access.'

In deploying people, the approach will allow bold initial projects similar to a venture model.Early projects with uncertain results can be quickly funded.Moreover, in the same way that Silicon Valley puts a great deal of human capital and shared knowledge at the fingertips of entrepreneurs, Biohub will similarly facilitate communication and collaboration between life sciences experts. Our hope is that richer networks and feedback loops will help accelerate discovery and development of cures for infectious diseases and a wide range of other life sciences challenges.'

In deploying risk capital, Biohub will be willing to take better risks on projects that might or might not generate results.The networks will help identify and inform which projects should get venture funding.The tools will help magnify the benefit of deployed risk capital.'

With its atmosphere of collaboration and bold experimentation, its emphasis on software-based tools and other high-tech resources, and deploying entrepreneurial scientists, Biohub may precisely help cure disease the way that Silicon Valley has helped deploy software companies.'

Michelle and I are excited for this opportunity to support Chan Zuckerberg Initiative in this way, and look forward to see what new technologies Biohus researchers develop."

I will also be serving on Biohus board, and look forward to working with its co-directors, Joseph DeRisi, professor and chair of biochemistry and biophysics at UCSF, and Stephen Quake, Stanford professor of bioengineering and of applied physics. Joe and I have known each other for years, and he has a habit of regularly blowing my mind with new good ideas. Stephen and I have shared a path from our days as Stanford undergrads, then Oxford.In discussing Biohub with him, I have learned fascinating and bold approaches to science and entrepreneurship. "

It will be exciting to work with both Joe and Stephen in this endeavor, as well as a delight to work with Priscilla and Mark.'

Entrepreneurship and technology can amplify and help realize human potential.This is part of what I love about Silicon Valley.Its awesome to apply this to science, health, and disease.Michelle and I are honored and excited to be part of Biohubs journey.'

'

ARTICLE: BUILDING THE NEXT ECONOMY'

In this series, professionals attendingNext:Economyshare their insights on the future of work. Read the postshere, thenwrite your own. Use #NextEconomy somewhere in the body of the post and @mentionNext:Economy conference panelistswhen sharing. For moreinsight and news on the Next:Economy, sign up for the weekly newsletterhere.'

The idea that we're shifting to the "next economy," to borrow the title of an O'Reilly Media conference I recently co-hosted with Tim O'Reilly in San Francisco, presupposes that our current one is ending. '

And that of course can be an unsettling prospect. People are wondering how they'll pay the bills. Where they'll find purpose. What life will be like in a world where AI, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things proliferate so rapidly that even the most diehard technophiles begin to wonder how long they can keep up with the treadmill of progress."

But while fear and uncertainty are natural precursors to major change, the key takeaway at the Next:Economy conference this year was the sense of optimism that informs the cultural shift that is underway.'

Entrepreneurs are well-acquainted with emotions like fear and uncertainty, because even in eras of stasis and conformity, they choose risk and the unknown over the tried and true. And so they recognize the potential of this current moment when so much is in play. Existing companies can use new technologies to create new competitive advantages. Startups can create new markets, introducing products that people don't even realize they need - until they try them and realize they can't live without them."

On the stage at Next:Economy, 19-year-old Stanford student Joshua Browder offered one example of this phenomenon. A little over a year ago, after he'd just obtained his driver's license in England, his home country, he found himself getting more parking tickets than his parents were willing to foot the bill for. "

So Browder started searching legal regulations for information he could use to appeal these tickets. The appeals he generated using his newfound knowledge were often successful, and as a result, he soon became the "local parking ticket guru" in his North London neighborhood, dispensing advice to friends and family.'

To streamline this process, he created a website in August 2015 called DoNotPay.co.uk that helps people draft their own appeals via a chatbot that guides them through the process. At Next:Economy, he told the audience that the site's users have successfully contested 180,000 tickets and saved approximately $5 million in the process to date."

But that's just the start of Browder's story. Once people saw how his site helped them with parking tickets, they started asking about other legal issues, such as seeking help with evictions or repossessions."

Quickly, Browder realized there were vast swathes of legal assistance that he could automate with his "robot lawyer" and provide to people for free. '

As a result of this highly automated service, people who could never afford traditional legal assistance have a new resource at their disposal. And various kinds of legal actions that may not have made economic sense to pursue using human lawyers such as challenging parking tickets or seeking compensation for delayed airline flights suddenly become feasible in a world of robot lawyers.'

Of course, in using AI technologies to create new services that make legal assistance more accessible to people who have often never used traditional legal services, Browder is setting the stage for further disruption. Many services that legal professionals have made a good living charging for can be automated too, and as Browder's "robot lawyer" grows more sophisticated, it will increasingly compete with human lawyers.'

Ultimately, Browder believes DoNotPay.co.uk will help streamline government services and deliver value to millions of people who need help navigating the different regulatory mazes that governments put into place. But its potential to displace some human lawyers touches on the primary theme of this year's Next:Economy: Namely, how do we create a new, tech-enabled economy that keeps humans in the loop and not just in a nominal or obligatory way, but rather, in a way that is both financially rewarding and personally fulfilling?"

Or to put it another way: How can we use automation, AI, and other technologies to make human work better, instead of making it obsolete?'

This isn't an easy challenge. But many of the people who spoke at Next:Economy are already exploring how to do this. Paul English, founder of the travel booking start-up Lola, explained how the app uses AI to amplify the efforts of live agents who interact with customers. In my conversation with IBM's David Kenny, who oversees the company's Watson initiative, Kenny noted how in medical contexts, Watson takes over the "grunt work," like radiology diagnoses, so human physicians can focus on solving the hard problems.'

Historically, both markets and government policies have rewarded entrepreneurs, investors, and inventors for being more efficient with capital by reducing the costs of labor. And this approach has had huge social benefits. Increasingly efficient deployment of capital led to an abundance of goods and services that both increased human well-being and simultaneously created more opportunities for people to pursue a wider range of meaningful work.'

But now that we're reaching a point where it is technologically possible to remove greater numbers of human workers from the system, we should think about new ways to allocate rewards to capital that privilege the creation of meaningful human work. Moving forward, we must incent the entrepreneurs, investors, and inventors who create the businesses that lead to jobs in the right ways."

For example, what if capital that is used to create companies that employ more than, say, 100 employees at an average salary of $75,000 is taxed at a lower rate than companies which do not meet these thresholds?'

Of course, before anyone turns a blue-sky idea like this into actual policy, a great deal of due diligence and iteration would have to take place. What are the optimal thresholds to use? How might the policy be gamed, and what unintended consequences might it produce?'

I present it not as a fully baked policy proposal, but rather as a thought exercise that shows how economic ecosystems are never inevitable manifestations of "natural" laws or principles, but rather the product of incentives and regulations that privilege certain actions and values over others.'

As we look to deploy AI and other technologies that have the potential to radically transform our economy, our workplaces, and even our sense of what it means to be human, we must remember this basic fact: The choices about the incentives we create and the values we favor are ours to make.'

And if we thoroughly understand all the factors in play, and embrace the future with a thoughtful but fearless and adaptive mindset, it is well within our power to make the right ones.'

ARTICLE: TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEXT ECONOMY'

In this series, professionals attendingNext:Economyshare their insights on the future of work. Read the postshere, thenwrite your own. Use #NextEconomy somewhere in the body of the post and @mentionNext:Economy conference panelistswhen sharing. For moreinsight and news on the Next:Economy, sign up for the weekly newsletterhere.'

In the U.S. alone, almost 5.9 million jobs currently go unfilled because of a mismatch between job requirements and the skills of potential employees.'

Around the world, this skills gap looms even larger.'

At the same time, there are real concerns about rapid advances in technology and the impact it is having on available jobs, the economy, and what role work, that profoundly human endeavor, will play in the lives of future generations as technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics play a larger and larger role.'

Traditionally, technological innovation has always led to profound shifts in our work lives, which in turn has led to shifts in the culture at large. And while these shifts have caused disruption and unease, as people try to adapt to new work patterns, a need for new skills, and new rhythms of life in general, they've always led to greater overall prosperity and a widening range of opportunities to pursue meaning through one's work."

This time, perceptive observers believe, the shifts and changes are happening so fast the creative destruction will be even more substantive than usual.'

Innovations like AI, robotics, on-demand services, and network-based platforms and businesses have already started changing traditional employment relationships, work patterns, and corporate structures. And such trends are destined to accelerate as these technologies mature and disperse across the market.'

But while these news technologies can amplify the challenges that companies and individuals face, they also give us extraordinary new powers to adapt to fast-changing conditions in creative, efficient, and productive ways.'

Consider LinkedIn: In 2002, when my co-founders and I created it, our goal was to connect the worlds professionals to make them more productive and successful.'

Today, our ambition is much greater. We want to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. To do that, we're building the worlds first Economic Graph, a digital map of the global economy that aims to include every member of the global workforce, every employer, and every educational institution."

Mapping this information on a single platform enables tremendously valuable insight into where opportunities are, where challenges may arise, and what companies, other institutions, and individuals should be doing to adapt to changing conditions.'

For example, around 12 percent of the unfilled open positions in the US require information technology skills. As a result, LinkedIn has also been working with the White House and the non-profit organization Opportunity@Work on an initiative called TechHire. A public-private partnership, TechHire combines federal grant funding and resources provided by large private-sector companies to create tech talent pipelines that can train individuals in accelerated fashion and give them the high-demand tech skills that today's employers require."

This is one of a series of initiatives that government policy makers, think tanks, foundations, and thoughtful investors and entrepreneurs have been spinning up in recent years to tackle problems that are paradoxically among the biggest opportunities for entrepreneurs but also too often ignored by them.'

For some in Silicon Valleys booming tech economy, its all too easy to miss that there are swaths of the country that are worse off than they were a decade ago. Many people worry about their futures in the changing work landscape, and especially about the futures of their children.'

The adaptation challenges we face are real.'

In my books The Start-up Of You and The Alliance, I've explored some ways that individuals and organizations should respond to the new opportunities and challenges that arise as we shift to a 21st century economy."

But we should also be thinking of how we adapt on a macro level as well. And the challenges we face won't all be solved simply by the entrepreneurial dynamism of the market."

Markets do a spectacular job of addressing some problems, and they have created enormous wealth for the world. But markets also need thoughtful public policy interventions to achieve their full potential. And they need entrepreneurs who take a broad, long-term view of our impact on the world.'

Thats why Im co-hosting an event called The Next:Economy Summit with Tim OReilly of OReilly Media on October 10 -11 in San Francisco, CA. We are trying to understand the profound changes that technology is bringing to the world of work, business, the economy, and the culture itself. In the process, we hope to help entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, business and labor leaders, and Washington policy makers develop an informed long-range vision for how to manage our transition into the Networked Age and a truly 21st century economy most productively.'

There are a lot of conferences that focus on whats hot today in Silicon Valley, and what the next flavor-of-the-month platform or service will be.'

This is an event that helps us think about the long-term impact of what we do. I hope youll join us in San Francisco or follow the discussions on LinkedIn and Twitter (#nexteconomy). I look forward to the robust discussions next week.'

ARTICLE: EXTRA SENSORY PRODUCTION'

As Joshua Cooper Ramo suggests in his important new book, The Seventh Sense, massively scaled, always-on connection changes the nature of objects and institutions. A heart-rate monitor that shares information with a million other heart-rate monitors functions differently than one that operates in standalone fashion. The same is true for automobiles, spare bedrooms, and the individuals who make up a TV audience or a country. The Networked Age doesn't just amplify or accelerate existing instances of knowledge transfer, economic exchange, and political action. It enables entirely new possibilities and behaviors."

Still, the extent to which networks are reshaping our lives and most important institutions remains surprisingly underappreciated. The Seventh Sense is Ramo's deeply considered attempt to address what's at stake in these early days of the Networked Age, and to envision what paths we might pursue as we move forward."

A former Time magazine senior editor who now serves as co-CEO and vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, he understands that it's not just code or hardware that defines our age. Instead, it's networks, the always-shifting set of relationships that the code and hardware enable, the near-omniscience that arises out of perpetual and pervasive feedback loops. Knowledge is power, the old saying goes, and today, thanks to networks, knowledge accrues and disperses and recombines at speeds and in ways that can be liberating and unsettling."

Or as Ramo puts it with poetic succinctness: "Constant connectivity taps like a hammer on the glass of our most comfortable institutions.

With his background in statecraft, Ramo is far more circumspect about "disruption" or the consequences of "changing the world" than the average Silicon Valley growth hacker. He recognizes that ISIS is as much a product of the Networked Age as Uber or Instagram. '

But ultimately Ramo positions that tapping hammer of constant connectivity as a constructive force, one that can make our most vital institutions more productive, more responsive, more resilient. In his estimation, we're at a turning point as significant as that of the Age of Enlightenment, when the Scientific Revolution ushered us out of the Dark Ages and into a new era increasing trade and prosperity, longer lifespans, and greater individual autonomy."

So how do we steer toward the best possible outcomes in our own moment of major and often chaotic transformation?'

The first step is to develop what Ramo dubs the seventh sense an "ability to look at any object and see the way in which it is changed by connection.

In the Networked Age, thousands of spare bedrooms becomes the building blocks of a new hospitality marketplace. Drivers seeking route-finding information become sensors who collectively reveal local traffic conditions. '

And as I've written in the past, when exploring the idea of network literacy, individual and organizational identity changes too. Networks make identity multivariate, distributed, and in part, defined by outside forces. In the Networked Age, you're never just "you" anymore. You're who you know and what they know about you; who they know; in what contexts they know you.'

The power of connected systems, Ramo notes, derives from "the number, the type, and the speed of the relationships they establish and then use." That's true of the individuals and organizations enmeshed within networks as well as the overall networks themselves. Today, individuals and organizations who possess the greatest network literacy will always be the first to learn about and adapt to changing conditions, new threats, and new opportunities. Without a well-developed seventh sense, you falter. With it, you possess the adaptability and resilience that individuals, companies, and even countries need now to prosper in a complex, fast-changing world.'

Ramo isn't just interested in diagnosing how network power works. The ultimate goal of The Seventh Sense is to plot a path forward, to suggest how we can best utilize all the new connected systems where so much of our lives play out now especially as these systems become even more essential to trade, finance, education, health, and overall economic and national security. Ramo views the challenge through the lens of a statesman: His counsel arises from a desire to ensure that this next generation of networks are informed by "American values of democratic choice, freedom of thought, and privacy.

Ramo's vision rests on a strategic approach toward network development that he calls "Hard Gatekeeping." America's networks, he suggests, must be developed and controlled with more emphasis on security. And while Ramo strategizes at a high level, it's clear he means the United States government should take a more proactive role in developing and controlling what he calls "gatelands," the networks where we will conduct much of our lives.'

"Completely open technology standards can be hijacked too easily," he writes. Thus, he envisions a world in which America no longer permits "any nation to plug into the country's markets or technologies or educations systems." '

Presumably, stronger forms of identity will be one feature of this new system. Another that Ramo suggests is a national "BitDollar" i.e. a digital currency backed by the U.S. '

Greater transparency and trust would potentially make these new gatelands more desirable venues for trade and finance, and thus they'd also function as powerful tools of diplomacy. Other countries that wanted to plug into America's systems would have to play by America's rules. Ramo offers an example: If a nation wanted access to America's trading platforms or cybersecurity databases, it would have to forgo any nuclear research."

Other countries, Ramo notes, would have gatelands of their own. And he emphasizes that America should not "force anyone else into its gated systems." Another possibility, of course, is that networks characterized by an even greater degree of openness than today's will emerge as a hedge against the reduced opportunities for anonymity, pseudonymity, and unregulated behavior in the gatelands that Ramo envisions.'

But if Ramo presents tomorrow's gatelands as an opt-in phenomenon that users choose voluntarily because they offers more security and better overall experiences, he also recognizes that any gatelands that achieve critical mass will exert an increasingly significant cost on anyone who opts out. That is precisely what gives them their leverage, both internationally and domestically. "Many future gatelands will express their power as much by cutting nations or people out as by counting them in," he concludes. "Imagine if you were not allowed to transact in the new Bitdollars.

The Internet and the networks it has enabled grew as fast as they did, and are as popular as they are, because they've largely been characterized by both permissionless innovation and permissionless use. "

Peter Thiel, Max Levchin, and other members of the PayPal team, including myself, didn't need to obtain any web-specific licenses when we starting offering online money transfer services in 1999. Satoshi Nakamato launched a new currency into the world without any government's prior approval. And while the regulatory status of trailblazing startups like Uber and Airbnb continues to evolve, they were able to introduce services that created massive value for both consumers and individuals seeking new sources of income, without having to obtain prior approval from any network gatekeepers."

But while it's hard to imagine that the web would have grown as fast as it did in the 1990s as a result of its fundamentally open nature, it's also true that many of today's most popular networks and platforms require user registration and other even more exacting forms of identification. So at this point it may be that users and entrepreneurs would flock to the more secure and transparent networks that would exist in the gatelands that Ramo envisions."

Ultimately, what The Seventh Sense makes so clear is that in 2016, 25 years after the birth of the World Wide Web, we're still in the formative stages of the Networked Age. And what makes the book so useful is the way that Ramo homes in on the crucial question of our age: How do we want the networks and platforms that grow more and more essential to our lives to evolve? "

Ramo describes the power of networks with a statesman's feel for history and sense of the moment, and that's precisely what we need right now. Networks are reshaping the world, and the questions and debates about who gets to control them and how we should design them for maximum benefit to all are only just beginning. To participate most productively in this moment, you need the Seventh Sense both the book itself and the understanding and facility for the Networked Age it will help you develop."

ARTICLE: THE ALLIANCES THAT POWER HBOS SILICON VALLEY '

(True spoiler alert:This essay contains spoilers about the Season 3 finale; you have been warned!)'

While you might think that HBO's Silicon Valley is a hit comedy about startups, venture capital, programming, egos, sex (well, for Erlich and Jared, at least), friendship, mind-altering drugs (well, for Erlich at least), and vomiting, it is easy to overlook the serious lessons it can teach us about people management."

Okay, now that you've stopped laughing and rolling on the floor, let me explain."

While Richard Hendricks hardly seems like a poster child for good management because of his many flaws--including, but not limited to crippling insecurity, the tendency to become emotional and highly inarticulate, a bad habit of falling and/or faceplanting, bedwetting, and the aforementioned vomiting--the fact remains that of the principal managers that the show portrays, Richard is actually the most successful people manager.'

Since the beginning of the show, the three CEOs we've seen the most are Richard, Gavin Belson, and Action Jack Barker. And while Gavin and Jack seem like more natural leaders (especially Action Jack), and both have been financially successful, they are constantly beset by employee defections during the course of the show. Over at Hooli, Gavin seems to fire or drive away an endless array of employees, including Richard himself, Donald Jared Dunn, the Nucleus team, and even Nelson Big Head/Bag Head Bighetti. Meanwhile, Jack's brief tenure at Pied Piper sees his entire core team rebel against his leadership. These defections occur despite the fact that Gavin and Jack use many of the accepted principles of management on their teams. Gavin tries to motivate Hooli employees by articulating grand (or at least grand sounding) corporate missions. For example, he says, Hooli isn't just another high tech company. Hooli isn't just about software. Hooli...Hooli is about people. Hooli is about innovative technology that makes a difference, transforming the world as we know it. However, these grand statements ring hollow when they come up against the reality of the actual work for people like Big Head and the Nucleus team. Jack takes a different approach than Gavin. Rather than appealing to employees through a corporate vision, he instead manipulates them by telling them what they want to hear, and by bribing them with lavish offices. Erlich comes into his first meeting with Jack intending to insult him with ageist jokes; in just a few sentences, Jack wins him over by flattering him and correctly pronouncing the name of his first startup, Aviato. But these external inducements mean little when Gilfoyle realizes that Jack's corporate strategy will force him to spend all his time sitting in a cavernous datacenter, and quickly resigns. (On a related note, I was pleased to see how well LinkedIn helped Gilfoyle to find other professional opportunities...and hoverboards.) In contrast, despite his many, many flaws, Richard's core team of Jared, Dinesh Chugtai, and Bertram Gilfoyle stick with him through a seemingly endless string of setbacks and embarrassments. They also achieve significant things together, including winning TechCrunch Disrupt and scaling up a homemade datacenter to handle the massive traffic from the livestream of a trapped museum worker about to drink his own urine. So if Richard lacks nearly all of the skills we look for in a leader or manager, what allows him to be the best manager on the show? It's not fancy corporate mission statements, or lavish perks and flattery. In his own hilarious, bumbling, inarticulate way, Richard actually employs many of the principles of The Alliance in his relationships with his employees."

Openness and honesty are one area in which the Pied Piper team can't be faulted, at least with each other. Richard is so incapable of deception that even when he attempts to lie, as in this season's finale, his conscience forces him to come clean. Yet this lack of guile, while sometimes frustrating to his employees, is also one of the key things that helps them build such strong relationships. You can see this in the relationship Richard has with Jared, who got exactly the opposite from Gavin Belson. Gavin gave Jared rich financial rewards, but also mistreated him (and couldn't even remember his real name, Donald). As Jared memorably told Richard, Hooli was like an abusive spouse to me. You know, like that guy who married Julia Roberts in "Sleeping With The Enemy"? It was dehumanizing. But then, you, Richard, you pulled me out of the life and you gave me hope and you gave me a sense of self-worth. Like Richard Gere did to Julia Roberts in "Pretty Woman". Every day here has been like that shopping-spree scene. I'm putting on hats.'

While Pied Piper is much like many Family-stage startups (<10 employees), in that everyone has one overarching Tour of Duty, which is to keep the company from dying, each member of the core Pied Piper team has his own specific Tour of Duty, including a clear mission, an understanding of how the company benefits from that mission, and how he personally benefits. For example, while Dinesh and Gilfoyle both loudly assert their personal value to Pied Piper, both also realize that Pied Piper is the best way for them to leverage their talent to build kick-ass products, which in turn is what drives their career and place in the Valley. At the same time, it's clear that team members can't simply do whatever they find interesting, as Dinesh discovers when, jealous of Gilfoyle, he tries to help by building a server, and instead causes a power outage that affects the entire block. Even with the comedy and dysfunction, persistence and success works by alignment on the tours of duty."

A final key to The Alliance is that the relationships managers build with employees can and should last beyond the current tour of duty, or even the employment relationship. Allies look out for each other, even if they no longer work for the same organization. When Richard is ousted as CEO, and is lying on the floor in heap of self-pity, Jared cheers him up by handing him a stack of job offers. Jared took it upon himself to find other companies that wanted Richard to be their CTO. While this is an extreme example, good managers work to align what's best for the business with what's best for the employeeespecially in the long term and over the course of a career. That's what allies do."

Starting a company is like throwing yourself off a cliff and assembling a plane on the way down. Thanks to Richard's unwitting application of The Alliance, as Season 3 draws to a close, we find the Pied Piper team coming back together to once again try to accomplish just that feat. Erlich and Big Head use their money to outbid Gavin Belson for Pied Piper's assets; Gilfoyle uses his dark magic to keep Dinesh's new videochat application running, and once again, somehow, Richard is leading his merry band of allies into the unknown future (and Season 4)."

A final note on the show: Entrepreneurship is frequently messy and sometimes absurd. Many efforts to create something from nothing are foolish. And, there are all kinds of people who succeed and fail at creation of new products, new technologies, new business models, and new companies. So, its great that the absurd, the dark, and the crazy parts are trotted out in a madcap parade of insanity and social dysfunction. I do sometimes worry that people tend to view the show as a letter-accurate documentary or commentary, and fail to appreciate what makes Silicon Valley (the place) great. What is truly amazing is that Silicon Valley creates so many great things, from search to social networks to electric cars to biotech, even though some of the ideas and people involved are absurd. I deeply respect both the generative power and impact of Silicon Valley, and the irony and comedy of HBO's Silicon Valley."

ARTICLE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN ATTRIBUTE. WE NEED MORE OF IT.'

It was an honor to speak to hundreds of entrepreneurs from around the world in the plenary sessionof the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Summit, hosted by The White House and the State Department at Stanford University. This post is the extendedversion of my remarks.'

Part I: Why is entrepreneurship important to society?'

"All humans were born entrepreneurs.

That's a quote from Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank. It's a quote I like so much I opened my first book with it, The Start-up of You."

It's a quote that resonates here in Silicon Valley -- because it positions entrepreneurship as a fundamental human attribute, a part of our DNA."

Entrepreneurs have always been crucial to human progress and well-being, but that's especially true now. As we've moved from the Industrial Age to the Information Age and now to the Networked Age, dynamism has replaced stability. Businesses come and go faster than ever. Entire industries are replaced by new ones in shorter and shorter time frames. Adaptability is crucial in this new era. At their core, this what both The Start-up of You and my second book, The Alliance, are about. How do individuals and companies cultivate an adaptability mindset to succeed and thrive in the Networked Age?"

Overall, the net impacts of our accelerating culture are positive. But the speed and dynamism of the Networked Age creates turmoil too. People are uncertain about their jobs moving forward whether it's competition from other countries, increasing automation, or just the continuous effort needed to maintain a set of skills and expertise that employers demand."

Entrepreneurship represents our best path forward. Entrepreneurs create the products and services that lead to new industries, new jobs, new opportunities. A society where entrepreneurship is flourishing is a society where workers have many opportunities to pursue meaning and livelihoods and governments have a revenue base that can support a wide range of services and infrastructure.'

Not every entrepreneur cares as much about his employees as Hamdi Ulukaya, the Turkish immigrant who founded Chobani yogurt in 2005 and recently distributed a significant portion of his company's stock to its 2000 employees. Not every entrepreneur is as socially committed as Celtel founder Mo Ibrahim, who has worked so hard to improve governance in Africa."

Some entrepreneurs simply want to make a buck for themselves. Others do it because they have a burning desire to advance new technologies, or simply because they can't imagine doing anything else."

We should value entrepreneurs in all their different incarnations. They're the ones who refuse to accept that the way things are today is the ways thing should always be."

In general, people crave stability and the familiar. That means the societies we create often up enshrining the past. In contrast, entrepreneurs are always seeking new possibilities and cultivating new opportunities. What could be done differently than the way things are done now? How do we push the world forward in ways that create new value and make the world better? Entrepreneurs dream up crazy, often controversial ideas that challenge the status quo and improve human prosperity and wellbeing. They push for change and progress. And it's this adaptation that helps us not just to survive in the face of changing conditions it helps us flourish."

Part II: What do entrepreneurs need to survive and thrive?'

I often say that starting a company is like jumping off a cliff and assembling an aircraft on the way down.'

The idea behind this analogy is that every new business effectively exists as the walking dead at launch. That's your default state: You don't have any customers. You're burning capital. The clock is ticking and you're falling fast. Until you have revenue on a solid trajectory to exceed costs, your businesss natural result is a crash."

So what do entrepreneurs need in order to fly?'

Networks. Networks of capital. Networks of talent and expertise. Networks of customers and product distribution.'

The networks that entrepreneurs can access have never been stronger, and that's why there's never been a better time for entrepreneurism."

For most of my career, I've developed networks that help entrepreneurs in one way or another. Obviously, there's LinkedIn. There's Kiva.org, where I'm a board member, which has helped more than 2 million micro-entrepreneurs obtain capital from a global network of more than 1.5 million lenders."

I'm also on the board of Endeavor, another organization that identifies and supports high-growth start-ups around the world -- because it's these high-growth companies that have the potential to create jobs at scale. Indeed, the companies Endeavor supports have created a net total of 587,000 jobs in 19 years."

Endeavor's impact is about to get even bigger. This week, it's announcing Catalyst II, a co-investment fund that will support high-growth companies across Latin, America, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia."

Endeavor has already proven the model has impact. Catalyst II is the successor of Catalyst I, a $20 million fund whose 35 portfolio companies have already created 10,000 jobs. And Catalyst II is going to be five times as big a $100 million fund, which I myself am supporting with an investment of $10 million.'

Organizations like Kiva and Endeavor steer entrepreneurs into the networks that help start-ups take flight. LinkedIn, in turn, is a platform where many of these key networks actually reside.'

LinkedIn has always functioned as a trust-and-identity platform that individuals use to be the entrepreneurs of their own careers. But for entrepreneurs developing their own businesses, it's a central network facilitator as well."

These days, even small businesses are often global businesses. A shop-owner in Kenya might be selling to a very small, localized market, but she gets financing from Kiva.org. A graphic designer located in Ohio might use Etsy and various global shippers to sell her letterpress greeting cards to the world.'

At LinkedIn, we see the shift to a global, increasingly connected mindset first-hand. Three out of four new members are international ones. Organizations in more than 200 countries have created company profiles. LinkedIns vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce and to achieve this vision, were building the worlds first Economic Graph, to digitally map the global economy and connect talent with opportunity at a massive scale. In fact, today LinkedIn is providing data from its EconomicGraphto over 40 of the White House Tech Hire cities in the US, which are designed to increase the number of individuals leveraging bootcamps and accelerators to develop in-demand tech skills.'

In the evolving world of global connectedness, entrepreneurs aren't confined to their own local markets or even countries to find the specific expertise, capital, and customers they need to make their businesses grow."

In the end, the Networked Age doesn't just make connectedness easier it turns connectedness into a key strategic edge that every individual must cultivate. Because as the world accelerates, as competition increases, the people who are most able to act on network intelligence, build alliances, and spot emerging opportunities, are the ones who will succeed."

It's entrepreneurs like yourselves who must embrace this fact most fully. And that's why we're giving every GES entrepreneur a one-year free LinkedIn Premium Account, so you can continue to build your networks of talent, investors, and customers in the most productive way possible."

Part III: What role does government play?'

Another key platform for entrepreneurship and one we often completely overlook in this context is government.'

Here in the land of disruptive innovation, we tend to be big believers in the invisible hand and the power of self-organizing systems.'

A summit on entrepreneurship, sponsored by the federal government, is not something you'd necessarily expect to pack an auditorium that's a just a short drone flight to Sand Hill Road. In these parts, the government is often portrayed as working at cross-purposes with entrepreneurism, a force that ends up impeding innovation."

There's serious truth in that. Political systems evolve in ways that favor incumbents over upstarts. And entrepreneurs are always the upstarts. They create the future that challenges the established order."

But to suggest that the government is fundamentally at odds with entrepreneurism is a classic mistake. Because entrepreneurism doesn't just magically happen. Entrepreneurs need a platform on which to innovate and build new businesses. And government creates that platform."

Think about it. For great entrepreneurship to happen at scale, you need a talented workforce. That means an educated workforce. And for education at scale, where the majority of society receives in-depth instruction over the course of years, you need the resources of government. Governments can also support entrepreneurship by establishing through policy social safety nets that enable citizens to take entrepreneurial risk.'

For great entrepreneurship to happen at scale, you also need reliable sources of capital. You need rule of law, and specific laws for the protection of property and the formation of businesses.'

More generally, you need a culture of trust and predictability. Even under ideal scenarios, entrepreneurism is a risky endeavor. So if you've got a culture where entrepreneurs and investors have to worry about corruption, theft, and other forms of lawlessness and instability, entrepreneurism is not going to flourish the way it does in places where good governance creates a culture of trustworthy institutions and trustworthy citizens."

Put all these things together, and you've got a platform that entrepreneurs can build on. What government does, in other words, is give the invisible hand a stable and potentially productive space in which to operate."

And there is a bit of a virtuous cycle, as entrepreneurship ends up playing key roles in governance and diplomacy. Commerce, after all, is what provides the revenues that pay for social services and public infrastructure.'

It also creates stability and security on a global level. When I created LinkedIn in 2003, I had a deep conviction about how it could transform individual lives and careers, but I hadnt fully considered what impact it might have on the level of global relations. Over time, though, Ive come to recognize the impact that increasing individual economic connectivity can have on improving global stability.'

When individuals use entrepreneurship to create deeper connections with each other, greater communication and greater understanding follow. And when these connections have an economic component, prosperity follows too. New webs of mutual interdependence, collaboration, and innovation form, with both national and global impact.'

Recognizing this, President Obama organized the first Global Entrepreneurial Summit in 2010. He understands the positive synergy that can exist between government and entrepreneurism how their own mutual interdependence ends up creating benefits for both. And events like this Summit serve as important recognition of this fact. So I want to thank him for his efforts in this regard and I also want to let him know that the offer for a LinkedIn Premium account extends to him as well because I hear he's contemplating a career shift."

Part IV: What can you learn from Silicon Valley during your time here?'

Today, advances in technology are increasing both the speed and the force of what economist Joseph Schumpeter once called "the perennial gale of creative destruction.

In the face of this gale, many people's reflex is to want seek shelter, slow things down, protect the status quo, and effectively lock in the past. But when you do that, you're locking in stagnation. You're not innovating or moving forward in creative, productive ways."

Here in the U.S., there are great concerns about the future of the middle class, and how to ensure that a broad base of our citizens continues to have access to jobs that allow for a secure, autonomous, and fruitful life.'

The way to do that is to harness dynamism and change, not reject it. We need to encourage innovation and bold new technologies and industries everything from Airbnb to self-driving cars.'

Of course, as we move forward, we must be conscious of the forces at work, and steer toward compassion and grace. How do we use the new technologies at our disposal to increase individual autonomy and empowerment? How do we smooth the transitions and dislocations that arise out of creative destruction?'

As you might expect by now, my answer is networks. Networks create resilience by giving people faster access to more resources and more opportunities.'

Think about how Silicon Valley functions. Over the last few decades, it has experienced booms and busts, all kinds of economic turmoil and disruption. Over the long term, though, Silicon Valley keeps growing stronger and more productive.'

And that's because it has mastered the art of leveraging networks. Networks of talent that grow out of Stanford University and UC Berkeley, the companies that already exist here, and aspiring entrepreneurs from across the planet. Networks of capital from the venture capital firms clustered on Sand Hill Road. Networks of open-source technology and resources."

Ultimately, the Valley's connectedness makes it both incredibly generative and incredibly resilient."

Now, as long as you've watched even just one episode of HBO's hit TV series Silicon Valley, then you know that the actual Silicon Valley is also incredibly generative when it comes to self-regard and smugness. Nowhere else, not even Hollywood, do people throw themselves million-dollar parties for democratizing pizza delivery."

But if we sometimes get too full of ourselves, or oversell our vision of the future, the same impulses that can lead to hubris also lead to breakthrough technologies and companies that do in fact change the world. To be a successful entrepreneur, you have to think boldly. You have to be unreasonably confident. You have to believe in your ability to create a future that most other people think is impossible, foolish, or crazy.'

But ultimately entrepreneurs are the people who do end up creating our future. And if you take away just one truth from the time you spend in Silicon Valley this week, I hope it's this: The consequences of our shift into the Networked Age are only just beginning."

We're still just starting to understand what it means on cultural, political, and economic levels to have instant access to almost anyone in the world. To have all of humanity so tightly connected, in webs of knowledge, cooperation, competition, and sometimes outright conflict."

In the end, that's what this summit is about: How do we use our new connectedness to create a world that is more harmonious, more secure, more abundant with opportunities for people to live productive and rewarding lives?"

All across the planet, for the foreseeable future, entrepreneurs are going to be pursuing different answers to that question. I look forward to learning from you all.'

ARTICLE: LINKEDIN TO MICROSOFT: CONNECTING GLOBAL AND CORPORATE PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS'

Companies have many founding moments. Founding moments are the key inflection points when leaders decide to change a path in order to better, or more quickly, realize their mission. We typically only think about the first founding moment, hiring a CEO, or the IPO, when in fact there are many.Today marks a founding moment for us: the decision to enter into an agreement for Microsoft to acquire LinkedIn.'

Great companies have great missions. LinkedIns mission has never wavered. Our mission is to connect the worlds professionals to make them more productive and successful. As a professional, your network is your competitive advantage: in skills, in intelligence, in opportunities, in connection, and in collaboration. In this networked age, it is the key advantage. When you marry our mission with Microsofts mission, to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more, its impossible to not imagine the massive opportunity for our members and customers.'

Its natural to be surprised that we are so excited about being acquired. Most companies view independence as key to realizing their mission. This is why so many founders struggle with finding the right CEO and in some cases, the right buyer. There is some merit to their concern; if two companies arent aligned on a mission, the combination will ultimately fail.'

Because we are so completely aligned, joining forces with Microsoft amplifies our mission, and it amplifies Microsofts mission. Bringing together the worlds leading professional cloud and the worlds leading professional network will help deliver a more connected, productive, and intelligent experience to our members and customers worldwide. It is our next re-founding moment. '

Let me tell you what gets me so excited as we join forces. Think about what happens when we combine our network, our platform of identities with Microsofts world-leading set of productivity tools, ranging from Office to Dynamics to Communications to Cloud to Windows to Cortana to Bing. Consider, for example, LinkedIns networkenabling Active Directory and integrating into Office Productivity. Consider, additionally, connecting LinkedIn identities to Outlook and Skype. Moreover, Microsoft has a great suite of technologies, such as artificial intelligence and Cortana technology, that can add game-changing new capabilities to LinkedIn. '

Microsoft has also had a re-founding moment under Satyas leadership. Jeff and I have so much respect for the transformation he has driven. Satya and Jeff are natural partners and our organizations will thrive under the purpose driven cultures both have built.'

Satyas leadership reflects great human and technological intelligence. Jeff is laser focused on realizing LinkedIns full potential and purpose. Satya and Jeff share the same vision. They both practice leadership as service to the mission. They have both built and scaled organizations with intelligent, compassionate management. '

Personally, I could not be more excited about what lies ahead. With LinkedIn, Ive been through a number of re-founding moments from the start of the company to bringing Jeff on-board. I believe we have found the ideal partner for our next chapter. When I co-founded this company 13 years ago, I imagined where we could go. I could not be more proud of what the LinkedIn team has achieved or more bullish about what we will achieve together with Microsoft in the years to come.'

...And, as is customary in these matters, heres the legalese:'

Additional Information and Where to Find It '

In connection with the transaction described above, LinkedIn Corporation (the Company) will file relevant materials with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC), including a proxy statement on Schedule 14A. Promptly after filing its definitive proxy statement with the SEC, the Company will mail the definitive proxy statement and a proxy card to each stockholder entitled to vote at the special meeting relating to the transaction. INVESTORS AND SECURITY HOLDERS OF THE COMPANY ARE URGED TO READ THESE MATERIALS (INCLUDING ANY AMENDMENTS OR SUPPLEMENTS THERETO) AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRANSACTION THAT THE COMPANY WILL FILE WITH THE SEC WHEN THEY BECOME AVAILABLE BECAUSE THEY WILL CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY AND THE TRANSACTION. The definitive proxy statement, the preliminary proxy statement and other relevant materials in connection with the transaction (when they become available), and any other documents filed by the Company with the SEC, may be obtained free of charge at the SECs website (http://www.sec.gov) or at LinkedIns website (http://investors.linkedin.com) or by writing to LinkedIn Corporation, Investor Relations, 2029 Stierlin Court, Mountain View, California 94043.'

The Company and its directors and executive officers are participants in the solicitation of proxies from the Companys stockholders with respect to the transaction. Information about the Companys directors and executive officers and their ownership of the Companys common stock is set forth in the Companys proxy statement on Schedule 14A filed with the SEC on April 22, 2016. To the extent that holdings of the Companys securities have changed since the amounts printed in the Companys proxy statement, such changes have been or will be reflected on Statements of Change in Ownership on Form 4 filed with the SEC. Information regarding the identity of the participants, and their direct or indirect interests in the transaction, by security holdings or otherwise, will be set forth in the proxy statement and other materials to be filed with SEC in connection with the transaction.'

ARTICLE: SO YOU THINK YOU CAN THINK?'

'

"We need more welders and less philosophers," Marco Rubio exclaimed during a presidential debate last fall.'

The larger point he was trying to make was about the virtues of vocational training, and the role it can play in helping young people develop relevant skills that employers truly value. And I would strongly agree with Rubio that vocational training does have tremendous value, and that it can help address a growing skills gap that exists in the U.S.'

But Rubio conveyed his sentiments via a false dichotomy. He didn't just say the world needs more welders. He said it needs fewer philosophers too."

By doing so, he implied that training people to think carefully about the nature of existence decreases our ability to develop welders and ultimately diminishes society's economic wellbeing."

Anyone who's ever looked at my LinkedIn profile will know why I take issue with the idea that philosophy is a frivolous pursuit with few real-world consequences: I spent two years in the early 1990s earning a master's in philosophy at Oxford. It was there that I started thinking deeply about identity systems in ways that would ultimately influence the creation of LinkedIn."

In my own experience, philosophy was the springboard to a life of meaning and entrepreneurial impact.'

Thats why I'm enthusiastic to nominate a contemporary philosopher for the Berggruen Philosophy Prize.Underwritten by the Berggruen Institute, a non-partisan think tank located in Los Angeles, California, the Berggruen Philosophy Prize will award $1 million each year to influential thinkers for lifetime achievement."

In doing so, it helps acknowledge the important role that philosophy and those who think deeply about human aspiration and experience play in our lives.'

From now until May 31, anyone can submit a nominee for the prize. Once the nomination period closes, the Berggruen Prize Jury will make a final selection and announce a winner in October.'

I'm nominating Robert Wright. For nearly three decades, in books like The Moral Animal, Nonzero, and The Evolution of God, Wright has been contemplating what he calls the "logic to human destiny.

Wright, who helped popularize evolutionary biology, has focused in a systematic and consistently illuminating way on how cultural constructs evolve via a kind of natural selection just as surely as Darwin's finches do."

Our economic and governance systems grow more complex and coordinated over time -- we've moved from clans and chiefdoms to international alliances and social media platforms that connect people from every country on the planet."

In similar fashion, our belief systems have adapted to prevailing economic, political, and technological conditions -- minimum viable deities who ruled capriciously and vengefully over narrow domains like war and fire have evolved into all-encompassing monotheistic saviors with global reach and appeal.'

Driving all this cultural adaptation is the dynamic of non-zero-sumness, which posits that mutual alliance and cooperation produces outcomes that benefit everyone who participates in ways they could not replicate on their own. As a result, Wright suggests, humanity has consistently upgraded itself over time, gradually but predictably becoming more just, more inclusive, and more appreciative of diversity as it pursues new levels of cooperation and interdependence in its quest for greater productivity and enrichment.'

In Wright's conception of the universe, in other words, welders and philosophers co-exist in complementary rather than antagonistic fashion. And no doubt there are even welders who philosophize and philosophers who weld!"

But even those who focus strictly on their singular vocation play complementary roles. Welders produce the built environment that facilitates human interaction and productivity, including philosophical discourse. Philosophers help provide the mental scaffolding upon which states and culture in general are built.'

Indeed, capitalism itself derives from the revolutionary work of Scottish philosopher Adam Smith, who hypothesized in The Wealth of Nations how the pursuit of self-interest through specialization, markets, and free trade would facilitate both individual liberty and aggregate public good.'

Whether you are building a single skyscraper or an entire society, the metaphysics matter as much as the physics. And in this particular moment, when newly emergent technologies are creating opportunities for both utopia and dystopia, we need more philosophers, not fewer.'

We should be paying more attention to those, like Wright, whose long view of history and insightful understanding of human aspiration helps contextualize and clarify the opportunities and challenges we face today.'

I hope many others will join me in submitting their own nominees for the Berggruen Philosophy Prize. You can nominate anyone excluding yourself. Welding experience will not disqualify anyone.'

ARTICLE: AMERICA: CLOSED FOR BUSINESS?'

Imagine yourself one hundred years from now. Yes, you're still alive, breathing through genetically engineered pig lungs, and having dinner at your favorite restaurant. A robot waiter rolls up to refill your glass of wine, which is equipped with a sensor that allows the restaurant to automatically deduct $10 from your Bitcoin account."

Your companion, who doesn't actually speak the same language as you, is saying how much she loves her salad, which comes from a farm that uses precision agriculture techniques to boost productivity by effectively dividing fields into one-inch square plots that each receive customized fertilizer mixes based on their specific conditions. You understand her perfectly thanks to a small device in your ear that instantly translates her words and perfectly mimics her voice."

Or who knows? Maybe all this will take place only twenty years from now. And thanks to advances in genomics, your replacement lungs could come from a de-extincted bucardo goat. The future is sooner and stranger than you think!'

How do we navigate and thrive in the face of the massive changes that are coming our way? That's the subject of innovation expert Alec Ross's instructive new book, The Industries of the Future."

Ross describes a world in which technologies like those described above are defining the way we live. Specifically, he identifies cloud robotics, the commercialization of genomics, digitized money, cybersecurity, and the data-ification of everything as the significant factors that will drive change over coming decades.'

But Ross, who served as Senior Advisor for Innovation to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, is hardly a high-tech Pollyanna. While he saw first-hand how start-up hubs in developing countries can unleash prosperity, he also understands the dislocating and potentially destructive possibilities inherent in a world that depends on computer systems to run. In the future, everything from your toaster to your pacemaker will be optimized through networked efficiencies and also potentially hackable.'

Thus, Ross is bullish on cybersecurity. In his view, it must function "as a central feature in all the products being developed and commercialized for tomorrow.

But ultimately Ross is even more bullish on openness as the core value that will determine the future success of countries, cities, and individuals.'

Globalization will continue to create competition, but it will also create opportunities for those who adopt a collaborative, non-zero sum mindset. When you can communicate fluently with anyone on the planet, and transfer digital money as easily as text messages, new opportunities for economic growth emerge.'

Of course, not everyone embraces the core value of openness.'

Here in the U.S., as we move toward the presidential election in November, the question of America's openness has been a consistent campaign subject."

Donald Trump wants to build a massive border wall whose proposed dimensions fluctuate wildly. Ted Cruz promises to build a wall as well, and also to "triple the number of Border Patrol agents" guarding it. Even Hillary Clinton with whom I agree on many things, though we differ here- has noted her past votes in favor of border "barriers" during campaign events.'

But a border wall is just the most physical manifestation of a closed, zero-sum mindset that could potentially undermine America's ability to innovate and grow its economy in the 21st century."

Trump, for example, would like Bill Gates to look into "closing that Internet up in some way." He's threatening to start trade wars with Mexico and China and "rip up" all existing trade agreements.'

Cruz, who says he supports free trade, won't necessarily go that far but he has yet to endorse the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the 12-country trade agreement President Obama has been pursuing to improve U.S. export opportunities. In this instance, he's in rare alignment with Bernie Sanders, who opposes TPP and most other free trade agreements as well."

With his proposed bans on Muslims and his promise to build a "massive deportation force" to expel undocumented immigrants from the U.S., Trump has added an element of xenophobia to his particular vision of American isolationism.'

But he's hardly alone in championing policies and perspectives that promote a more closed America at precisely the moment America should be pursuing greater openness and connectivity."

As Alec Ross suggests, prosperity goes to societies "that don't just double down on the past but that can adapt and direct their citizens toward industries that are growing.

Ross also notes the role openness plays in the technological advantages that the U.S. continues to enjoy. We're still the number one destination for foreign scientists from nearly every country in the world because they want jobs at our universities. And ultimately the research they do here impacts America's broader culture and economy in ways that benefit us all."

Similarly, as data has evolved into the world's most valuable global resource, a bias toward openness delivers greater economic rewards. In Ross's estimation, restricting access to data now is strategically akin to "regulating land use during the agricultural age or regulating what factory owners could build during industrialization.

Again, Ross is careful to emphasize that states are never 100 percent open nor 100 percent closed. Openness can and should be applied judiciously, with security as well as prosperity in mind.'

But it's crucial to strike the right balance, because openness is what leads to innovation. Just look at recent history. In the 1950s through the 1970s, American citizens attempted to breakdown walls and barriers through feminism, the Civil Rights movement, the gay rights movement, and more. Various global policies liberalized international trade. All of this helped create a growing culture of openness and innovation that in turn created economic growth."

Instead of building border walls, we should be building networks and alliances that leverage the power of tightly connected global markets. Instead of trying to figure out how to "close that

Internet up," we should be focusing on how to extend high-speed Internet access to all. Instead of encouraging racial animosity and religious intolerance, we should be cultivating the diversity that leads to innovation.'

Closing borders, erecting trade barriers, and cracking down on free speech won't improve America's fortunes it will just make America more like North Korea. In today's rapidly shifting world, we need more openness, not less of it. That's the real key to making America great in the 21st century."

ARTICLE: HOW WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION, COURSERA AND OTHERS ARE BUILDING TRUST, COACHING THEIR MANAGERS AND KEEPING THEIR EMPLOYEES'

When I wrote The Alliance with my co-authors Ben Casnocha and Chris Yeh, we had a vision of transforming the world of work by helping companies and employees understand how to build stronger, longer, more honest relationships with each other. To help others adopt that vision, we co-founded Allied Talent with Chip Joyce, to guide organizations and managers on how to apply the principles defined in our book. Since then, Allied Talent has worked with dozens of companies both in Silicon Valley and around the world, such as LinkedIn, Coursera, Microsoft and SAP. I was recently asked at a New York Times event on the Future of Work to talk about what we've learned from the companies who have adopted the Alliance Framework. Here are lessons and stories we can share with a broader audience."

According to various research, trust in the workplace the proportion of employees who say they have a high level of trust in management and the organization they work for is near an all-time low.Anna Stillwell from the Wikimedia Foundation (the keepers of the Wikipedia) described the consequences of such a reality the following way: A lack of trust and a lot of process is the worst of all scenarios. Disengagement is high. Work is slow and frustrating. Organizational goals suffer. Trust is the antidote...Trust allows us to scale without relying on process-heavy bureaucracy."In our view, one key driver of lack of trust at work is that employees do not feel like they can be open and honest with their managers about the the work at hand and especially their own career development. Anna brought in Allied Talent to help address this challenge, and said afterward, Our people were able to trust Allied Talent quickly and open up about their struggles. As a result, real learning happened and managers left trusting one another.With our new partner CultureAmp, we're helping clients assess the current levels of trust inside their organization. And then we're training the managers of those companies on how to lead honest conversations about both company objectives and personal career development.'

Recruiting, engaging, and retaining entrepreneurial employees depends in large part on a managers ability to discuss and facilitate career development. However, recruiters, managers, and executives are often poorly-equipped to lead these conversations. Toby Murdock, the founder and CEO of Boulder-based content marketing company Kapost, set out to fix that. His goal: to make his company the best place in Colorado to launch and accelerate a career in high tech. He worked with Allied Talent to make the Alliance Framework a foundational element of both Kapost's culture and talent strategy check out the company Culture page. Thanks to a compelling employee value proposition around career transformation, Toby has successfully recruited entrepreneurial employees into the company who might have otherwise been out of reach.Once at your company, those entrepreneurial employees require high-trust 1:1 conversations with their manager. A paradox of The Alliance is that, as a manager, acknowledging that an employee might move to another company someday is a display of honesty that's necessary in career conversations. It'll also help you truly understand your employee's values and aspirations. Building trust through honesty, and having a better handle on what your employee really wants, are key ingredients to improving employee retention lengthening job tenures."

For healthy, growing companies, we've found that organizing mutual commitments as "Tours of Duty" provides a shared language that allows leaders, managers, and employees to talk about how to structure work together. Dan Berger, the founder and CEO of Social Tables, a Washington DC-based provider of collaborative event software, describes The Alliance as his company'sgo-to framework and has defined Tours of Duty for each member of his executive team. Tours of Duty help ensure that managers and employees are in agreement about an employees mission, what success looks like, and how completing that mission will advance the employee's career. Lila Ibrahim, the Chief Business Officer of online education leader Coursera, reports that these ideas and language have led to conversations that are more direct, transparent, authentic.'

A few years ago, according to Stanford's Jeffrey Pfeffer, a survey of the American workforce revealed that 35% of U.S. employees would forego a significant pay raise in exchange for seeing their direct manager fired. In another report, which reviewed numerous studies on management and leadership, the Center for Creative Leadership concluded that fully 50% of managers are estimated to be ineffective (that is, a disappointment, incompetent, a mis-hire, or a complete failure) in their current roles.There are incompetent managers even in great companies. At a minimum, every company that's growing is filled with first-time managers who will likely struggle to build trust with their employees. Great leaders are proactive about equipping their managers with the skills and tools they need to succeed.That whatRami Essaidis doing. He isCEO and co-founder of Distil Networks, a rapidly-growing cybersecurity firm headquartered in Virginia. After working with Allied Talent, he reported, Managers could have high trust, high quality conversations about career goals, aligning them with the companys mission, and managing misalignment. The Alliance has helped Distil better align the company and its employees and [the framework] has been woven into our DNAeven called out in our culture statement.These aren't just anecdotes; based on surveys conducted after dozens of Allied Talent workshops, managers who take part feel much more confident in their skills:"

As an author, it's incredibly gratifying to see ideas that started with me, Ben, and Chris and our various colleagues and friends at LinkedIn and several other companies turn into tools that are helping leaders build stronger employee relationships, increase engagement, and improve employee retention. Writing a book isn't the end of the path; it's just the beginning."

ARTICLE: THE FOUR TIERS OF ENGAGEMENT: WHAT SILICON VALLEY TAUGHT ME ABOUT COLLABORATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT'

Recently I was talking with the noted surgeon, writer, and public health researcher Atul Gawande about his demanding schedule and how he tries to manage it for maximum impact.'

As I described the framework I use to navigate Silicon Valley and all its potential deals and alliances, Atul suggested my approach could help any busy professional trying to prioritize her obligations, not just Silicon Valley types. So I'm sharing it here."

In Silicon Valley, thousands of start-ups are taking root and reaching fruition at any one time. For those who work here, staying focused and productive becomes a challenge as new opportunities present themselves.'

Early in my own career, for example, I was immersed in running my own start-up, Socialnet. It was a serious foundational commitment, but then Peter Thiel and Max Levchin approached me about helping out at their own start-up, PayPal.'

That also seemed like a major opportunity, so I started wondering: Was there a way I could have a strong impact at PayPal while fulfilling my existing role at Socialnet?'

As I note in The Startup of You, I reached an agreement with Peter and Max that essentially involved a formal but limited commitment of time: I would serve on their founding board of directors and promise to return their phone calls by midnight the same day.'

This allowed me to collaborate on PayPal in an ongoing and substantive way and yet continue my work on Socialnet. Eventually, I decided to commit fully to PayPal, and that turned out to be a hugely important decision in my overall career arc.'

In Silicon Valley, this is the kind of challenge that entrepreneurs and executives face as their networks expand. In an environment of increasing abundance, it's crucial that you learn to invest your time, your resources, and your capital to greatest effect."

Defining my relationship with Peter and Max in a flexible but clear-cut manner was an early instance of my framework for maximizing collaborative opportunities in a time-crunched world. Over the years, I've continued to develop my approach, which essentially mirrors how Silicon Valley creates start-ups. "

Specifically, I think in terms of four tiers of potential engagement with a company or any project.'

While these different roles help determine how I engage with start-ups, I use them generally too for projects as well as formal companies.'

For example, when I decided to develop and co-teach a course on blitz-scaling for Stanford University, I committed to functioning as a principal for the course of the project. There was no company involved, but in my mind, and in budgeting my time as we developed and then taught the class, I operated as a principal member of the team.'

TIER OF ENGAGEMENT: PRINCIPAL'

When you commit to functioning as a principal, you essentially say, "I own this, and it's my responsibility to bring this endeavor to fruition." You're involved on a daily basis. You may have contributed your own assets. You probably have or at least are in the process of recruiting and thus managing employees. You're responsible for the active management of whatever resources define the entity or project.'

Being a principal, in short, is a serious commitment. You deal with all the significant issues that arise, and ultimately you determine the overall path and outcome of the endeavor. If it succeeds, you bask in the glory. If it fails, you own the failure.'

So at the end of the day, you can't just say "Well, I did my best and tried and that's that." If you're a principal, you're a captain of the ship. And that means it's your obligation to do every that's reasonably possible to bring that ship to port.'

Of course, the definition of what's "reasonably possible" changes depending on the scope of the endeavor. If you're working on a small project, such as hosting a birthday party for a friend of yours, "reasonably possible" could mean working through the weekend. If you're CEO of a company that has raised $100 million from investors, it means a great deal more. You're the captain of that ship, and that means you're the first person on it and the last person off it, whether it sinks or successfully arrives at port.'

Because of the commitment level required, being a principal necessarily means limiting your focus. As my friends Elon Musk and Jack Dorsey are currently demonstrating, you can in fact be a principal at two major companies at once. But it's an extremely expensive proposition in terms of the time and focus you must invest, and thus very difficult and rare."

If you're talking about projects rather than companies, your potential capacity increases. For example, on the company level, I have a principal role as a partner at Greylock. And in the course of developing the blitzscaling class at Stanford I functioned as a principal there too. But that was a project rather than a full-fledged company, and I had other partners functioning as principals too Greylock's John Lilly, my LinkedIn co-founder Allen Blue, and Chris Yeh, who also co-authored The Alliance with me (and Ben Casnocha)."

So functioning as a principal on projects rather than companies can expand your capacity. But it shouldn't expand it too much. Indeed, if you find that you're always engaged as a principal in four or five different projects, you're probably not giving at least two of them the fully engaged leadership that success demands in today's ultra-competitive professional landscape."

TIER OF ENGAGEMENT: BOARD MEMBER'

As a board member, you engage in a substantive but less immersive fashion than you do as a principal. You've committed to providing ongoing strategic governance and assistance to the endeavor. But while your mandate is to help manage resources intelligently, you're not directly responsible for the project's outcome in the way that a principal is."

As a key strategic partner to the endeavor's principal or principals, you must maintain an ongoing picture of the endeavor's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats i.e., what's commonly known as a SWOT analysis."

For example, you must understand where the project is in its development cycle. You have to know how it fits into the overall industry or domain in which it's situated. To maintain this evolving, three-dimensional image of the endeavor, you're probably communicating with the principals on a weekly to monthly basis."

That way, when you're out in the field, you can function as a key ambassador and intelligence gatherer for the project's principals. Could the person you're having lunch with benefit from whatever the project's greatest strength is? Does that new startup you heard about have complementary resources or assets that could help shore up one of your project's weaknesses?"

At the same time, your role is not only outward-facing. Part of your responsibility involves monitoring and assessing the principal's performance, and offering productive (and sometimes challenging) feedback."

While you function as a key strategic advisor to the principal, your primary allegiance is to the greater endeavor or organization. You should be doing everything you can to help the principal succeed except in cases where it's the principal who is impeding the overall chances of the endeavor's success. Then, in your role as a board member, you have to make the hard decision of finding a new principal."

Of course, as a board member, your role may vary substantially from endeavor to endeavor. Even in the case of formally appointed boards, this is true, with different companies having different expectations about what level of engagement each board member provides. It may be that your duties/expectations are fairly limited, such as helping a principal recruit others for a project, or helping to scope out a start-up's vision and culture."

In less formal scenarios i.e., when you're functioning, say, as a "board member" for a colleague's effort to host a fundraiser for a local nonprofit this is even more common.'

In either case formal or informal it helps to mutually articulate the scope of your ongoing commitment. You don't have to map out every detail in advance, as commitments and expectations can evolve over time. But you do need clear communication right from the start, and an ongoing emphasis on clearly defined roles."

As a board member, you can participate more broadly than you can as a principal, but there are still limits. Because board member duties can vary widely from endeavor to endeavor, your capacity can vary broadly too. If you're functioning primarily as a VC partner or investor and being a board member is essentially your full-time gig, you might pursue as many as 10 12 board-level engagements at any one time. In contrast, if you're the founder of an early-stage start-up, you'll probably want to limit your board-level engagements to no more than one."

TIER OF ENGAGEMENT: INVESTOR'

A third way to participate in the various opportunities that present themselves is as an investor. Here, whether you're dealing with a for-profit start-up, a philanthropic project, or any other endeavor, your role as an investor will likely have a literal component i.e., you will be contributing money to the endeavor."

And at the very least, you'll be investing some kind of tangible asset access to your Rolodex, an agreement to make a series of introductions, a commitment to serve in an informal role as an advisory board member."

Because you have made this investment, you will certainly try to be helpful to the endeavor's principals however you can. But ultimately your level of commitment will be reactive rather than proactive."

Unlike a board member, you won't have to maintain a real-time SWOT analysis of the company or project. Nor will you be responsible for the project's overall success or failure in the way that you are when you're a principal or a board member."

But if a principal whose project you've invested in solicits your advice and assistance, you'll be committed to offer your assistance on a responsive basis. You may not end up fulfilling the exact request the principal makes. But you are committed to trying to be helpful in some way."

TIER OF ENGAGEMENT: FRIEND'

The final tier in my framework is that of "friend." As a friend, you have a relationship or alliance with one of the endeavor's principals, but no formal or even ongoing commitment to the project. You might even put money into a project but you ultimately exist outside the project's orbit. Your engagement is serendipitous, reactive, and ad hoc.'

If you're having lunch with a principal, and she wants to discuss her project, you do what you can to offer feedback, advice, and whatever other useful counsel you might provide. But your commitment in the project exists only in that moment. When lunch is over, so is your commitment. You might keep thinking about the project, but you have no explicit ongoing obligation or tie to it."

STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES THROUGH CLEAR ENGAGEMENT'

To be a key strategic ally to the people in your network, clarity matters. You should aim to strengthen relationships through proactive engagement. But you should also be clear about what you're committing to."

Successful collaboration is a key to long-term career success, in Silicon Valley and everywhere else. But the key to successful collaboration is managing your own time well.'

That's why I've found this simple framework so useful over the years. When new opportunities arise, it offers an easy way to do a quick reality check. Do you really have time to assume the responsibilities that a principal level of engagement demands? Are you so taken with an idea or a principal that you know you at least want to function as an investor? Are you in agreement with the principals about what the scope of your role will be?"

These tiers aren't binding. You might graduate from investor to board member, depending on how events play out. Conversely, you can go from board member to investor, depending on how events play out over time. But as you evaluate new opportunities, accurately assessing your level of potential engagement is crucial."

The right engagements are ultimately what propel your career. You can't say "yes" to everything. But if you assess opportunities through these four tiers, you'll be able to manage your time more effectively and thus be able to say "yes" when the most promising opportunities arise. After all, you never know when the project a colleague wants some help on might turn out to be the next PayPal.'

ARTICLE: JEDI TOURS OF DUTY WITH THE (REBEL) ALLIANCE '

Since our book, The Alliance, came out last year, people have asked me to explain the different Tours of Duty. The Alliance shows how and why a manager and her employee should structure that employees work as a tour of dutya specific mission that, if achieved, advances the business of the company, and the career of the employee. By defining the clear and explicit terms of their alliance, manager and employee can build a stronger and paradoxically longer relationship based on mutual trust and benefit.'

Many people, while they grasp the fundamental concept of a Tour of Duty, dont understand the three different variations: Foundational, Transformational, and Rotational. We cite a few examples in the book. However, with the release of The Force Awakens, I realized that George Lucas already created the perfect examples in the original Star Wars, A New Hope.'

Foundational Tours of Duty'

The strongest and longest type of tour is the Foundational Tour of Duty. Here, the employee plans to stay with his or her employer for the conceivable future, which could very well mean the rest of his or her career. These Foundational employees play a critical role, both as senior leaders (founders and CEOs should be on Foundational Tours, as well as some executives) as well as cultural guardians and ambassadors.'

Princess Leia Organa is on a Foundational Tour of Duty. Her attachment to the Rebel Alliance is deep and permanent, and she is a key leader, despite her youth. Through her example, she is ultimately able to convert the other key characters in the movie to her organization. She is central to bringing the Rebel Alliance together and focusing them on the big mission into the future.'

Transformational Tours of Duty'

The Transformational Tour of Duty is a critical part of any startup, including the Rebel Alliance. Here, the employee joins an organization to focus on a particular mission. Usually, this Tour of Duty has a definite end point after the mission is achieved, which enables the manager and employee to know when to engage a possible follow-up tour of duty. Transformational Tours of Duty are a great way to bring in fresh talent that can transform the business, while the experience transforms the career of those employees.'

Luke Skywalker is on a Transformational Tour of Duty. He joins Princess Leias cause because he is tired of being a farmboy, and yearns to transform his life. In doing so, he both transforms the state of the Rebel Alliance by destroying the first Death Star, and transforms his own career by starting down the path of becoming a Jedi Knight. He shares a mission with the alliance, and wants the outcome; however, his primary mission is being a Jedi which aligns with a tour of duty with the Rebel Alliance.'

Rotational Tours of Duty'

While Rotational Tours of Duty may seem less important than the Foundational and Transformational tours, they still play a critical role in the success of any organization. Unlike Foundational and Transformational tours, which tend to be unique and personalized, and thus difficult to easily scale, the lighter-weight nature of the Rotational tour makes it appropriate for massive scale, for example when McKinsey or Goldman Sachs hires a new class of analysts. Rotational Tours can also work even where there is less apparent alignment between the employee and the company.'

Han Solo starts out on a Rotational Tour of Duty. Obi-Wan Kenobi (a boomerang employee who has returned to the Rebel Alliance after serving in the Clone Wars, returning for a transformational tour) and Luke hire Han, Chewbacca, and the Millennium Falcon to transport them to Alderaan to rendezvous with the Rebel Alliance. After they discover that the Death Star has destroyed Alderaan, Luke negotiates a new Rotational Tour with Han by convincing him to rescue Princess Leia for more wealth than you can imagine. In the end, of course, Han joins the Rebel Alliance and transforms from a spice smuggler to the heroic (but still lovably roguish) General Solo.'

So if you find yourself uncertain whether an employee is on a Foundational, Transformational, or Rotational Tour, just ask yourself: Is this a Leia, a Luke, or a Han?'

(Special thanks to Allied Talent CEO Chip Joyce for suggesting this analogy, and to my co-author Chris Yeh for a fun draft.)'

ARTICLE: BLITZSCALING LESSONS FROM MASTER YODA: MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU'

In todays highly networked world, a key secret to building startups into massively successful companies is blitzscaling: Rapid, relentless growth that allows you to become the first player to achieve scale and develop a daunting competitive advantage. Blitzscaling has allowed companies like Google and Facebook to grow from garage to global dominance in less than a decade.'

You can learn how to blitzscale by analyzing the growth of these important companies as my fellow instructors and I did in our recent class at Stanford, CS183C: Technology-Enabled Blitzscaling. Another way to learn, however, is to draw inspiration from earlier eras, such as those from a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.'

In honor of the release of Star Wars: The Force Awakens, here are five blitzscaling lessons from Yoda, Grand Master of the Jedi Order:'

1. Judge me by my size, do you? Hmm? No. And well you should not. For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is.'

Blitzscaling is a powerful tool which can enable smaller companies to outmaneuver and defeat their larger competitors. Facebook didnt seem like much of a threat to bigger competitors like MySpace; it was a small social network that focused on a handful of college campuses. But this focus allowed Facebook to build a product that truly tapped into peoples desire to connect with each other and share lifes moments, rather than just hear from their favorite bands. By the time its competitors realized what Facebook had done, Facebooks blistering growth allowed it to catch and surpass them on a compounding curve.'

2. You must unlearn what you have learned.'

Most companies are built for growth, but few are built for continuous hypergrowth. As Googles Eric Schmidt told our class, Its easy to double, but its very hard to quadruple every year. As a company scales, the practices and processes that worked for a single office with tens of employees dont scale up to handle multiple offices with hundreds of employees. For example, Patrick Collison of Stripe noted that as his company grew, he had to shift his style from informal, one-on-one communications to formal, explicit, broadcast communication. Said Patrick, A startup is not a natural environment. The optimal things to do dont always feel natural. The social groups you belong to dont typically grow 100% per year. This pattern is true of all blitzscaling companies.'

3. Always in motion is the future.'

The world around us is constantly changing. It can seem unfairas soon as you think youve got your market figured out, everything shifts on you. But the great entrepreneurs and their companies understand that you cant rest on your laurels. Facebook was the dominant social network on the Web, but the rapid rise of iOS and Android meant that its position was far from secure in the new world of mobile. Mark Zuckerberg acted quickly and decisively, purchasing Instagram and WhatsApp, and building out a suite of mobile apps. Three years after Facebook started running mobile ads, mobile advertising accounted for 76% of its ad revenue.'

4. Do or do not. There is no try.'

Blitzscaling is risky. Its expensive and uncomfortable to grow at such a rapid rate. But winner-take-all markets seldom reward half-measures. In 2002, Larry Page was convinced that Googles new AdWords product was a gold mine. What they needed was more search traffic, and Larry knew how to get itby winning the deal to provide the search engine for AOL. When he was warned that bidding on the deal would mean betting the company, Page responded, We should be able to monetize the pages. If not, we deserve to go out of business. Google offered AOL 85% of ad revenues and agreed to an annual minimum payment of $150 million. At the time, Google had just $10 million in the bank. The deal ended up making both Google and AOL a huge amount of money. Do or do not, indeed.'

All blitzscaling involves taking key risks capital, talent, company organization in order to achieve a market position quickly. And, often, these key risks are to establish a network effect or sufficient scale.'

5. Fear is the path to the Dark Side'

As with learning the ways of the Force, learning how to use blitzscaling effectively can be an arduous journey. In the struggle for control of the galaxy (or your market), it can be tempting to take shortcuts, whether by turning to the Dark Side, or by relying on easy capital to buy growth that doesnt actually confer lasting competitive advantage. Do not let your fear of the competition drive you to rash action. A true Jedi of blitzscaling chooses the right moment to act. And, allies well with other Jedi on missions in support of the Force.'

Study well the lessons of Master Yoda, and may the Force be with you.'

ARTICLE: SUNNY DAY FUND: WHY WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR SHARED ENERGY FUTURE NOW'

Climate change is a global issue that threatens to impact the environmental and economic well-beingof peoplearound the planet. To mitigate its long-term impact, we need new, transformative sources of clean, affordable, carbon-free energy production that we can produce at lower costs than today's dominant energy sources. The innovation required to fuel this transition will only occur through a joint, networked effort between all sectors of society. Governments, academic research institutions, and private investors and entrepreneurs must all play crucial and complementary roles."

That's why I'm participating in the Breakthrough Energy Coalition alongside Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Richard Branson,Marc Benioff, John Doerr,Vinod Khosla, Jeff Bezos, Jack Ma, Meg Whitman,Masayoshi Son, George Soros and many other global business leaders. I applaud both Bill's substantial capital commitment, and the leadership he's shown in creating a network behind the Breakthrough Energy Coalition."

Our collective commitment: To work with governments around the world to accelerate research and investment in potentially transformative clean-energy technologies. As entrepreneurs and investors, we bring important skills to direct human and financial capital to maximize the chances of breakthrough success.'

As history has shown many times over, aggressive and broad-based government-funded technology research can catalyze new and transformative industries, including, of course, the Internet. But as Bill notes in his recent essay on energy innovation, the U.S. government currently devotes less than 1 percent of the total it spends annually on energy to R & D just $5.3 billion. "In the United States," Bill writes, "consumers spend more on gasoline in a week than the government spends on clean-energy research in a year.

Jason Bordoff, who heads Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University (where I serve on the Advisory Board), emphasizes this point as well. "U.S. government investment in energy innovation has declined for decades, with energy research funding smaller than in other sectors like biotech or than in other industrialized nations," he notes in a recent CNBC commentary.'

We believe governments should at least double their current levels of clean energy R & D over the next five years and so far 20 of them have signed on to this goal.'

But governments alone cannot accelerate innovation as fast as we need to accelerate it. At this week's U.N. summit on climate change in Paris, long-term goals revolve around limiting overall global warming to 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. To even accomplish that goal what Bill calls our "least bad option" in regard to mitigating the negative effects of climate change the world's most prolific carbon emitters will need to reduce their emissions by 80 percent from current levels.'

While governments must increase their funding commitments for basic and applied research, we also need private investors who are ready to make bold but patient investments in early-stage companies that are taking the most promising technologies out of research labs and onto a path toward eventual commercialization.'

Historically, energy innovation has been an extremely lengthy process. Hydraulic fracturing was invented in the 1940s, for example, but didn't emerge as a major commercial source of energy production until the mid-2000s. Solar and wind have had similarly slow development trajectories. As a result of these lengthy development and implementation horizons, a "capital gap" exists in the energy industry.'

Promising technologies that are ready for real-world testing and iteration but are not yet mature or risk-free enough to attract traditional investors cannot find the funding they need to survive this key stage of their development.'

This is where the Breakthrough Energy Coalition will play a strategic role. Working primarily with the countries that have committed to increasing their funding of the basic research pipeline, we will be investing in selected technologies that are ready for early-stage private investment but not yet proven enough to attract investment from traditional private sources. Our plan is to invest in a wide range of novel approaches that have demonstrated a credible pathway to eventual rapid scaling.'

While substantive government funding will provide the foundation for accelerating innovation, private-sector participation is equally necessary. Technologies are pioneered in lab settings, but tested, improved, and mainstreamed in commercial markets. The capital the Breakthrough Energy Coalition provides will be important. But the other resources we can draw upon networks of talent and expertise we can tap into, experience in blitzscaling organizations from start-ups to global entities in accelerated fashion will be just as critical.'

In the Networked Age, as billions of people use digital platforms and marketplaces to connect with each other, we're on the verge of a global entrepreneurial renaissance. But entrepreneurial energy requires actual energy. As I've said before, the Networked Age runs on power strips, cargo ships, and Uber trips. As developing nations continue to industrialize and grow their economies, global energy consumption will rise significantly. That will broaden prosperity and have massively positive benefits for everyone."

To ensure the best possible outcomes for all, we need to develop clean energy technologies that can help us rapidly decarbonize our economies. It's a substantial challenge, but so too are the resources we can collectively draw upon to address it. In the Networked Age, we have new capacities to pool resources and share knowledge and expertise. We can test and iterate with tremendous speed. And once we identify technologies, products, and solutions with real-world viability, we can accelerate global adoption much more rapidly than we were able to do so in a less connected world."

But our quest for large-scale, reliable, affordable, and carbon-free energy will only succeed if governments and the private sector work together in distributed but collaborative fashion. For that reason, I encourage more countries to embrace the goals outlined at Mission Innovation, and more business leaders to support our efforts at the Breakthrough Energy Coalition. The Networked Age creates part of the problem, as globalization brings prosperity and economic activity to the entire world. Working together, the Networked Age can also bring the solution through collaboration on new technologies and commercial initiatives. The investments we make in this realm now can power the way toward a prosperous, secure, and sustainable future for future generations across the planet.'

ARTICLE: TEXTING OUT AN S.O.S. SAVING LIVES WITH SMARTPHONES AND BIG DATA'

Only two percent of high school students who experience suicidal thoughts use telephone crisis hotlines.'

But that doesn't mean they don't want to talk about the issues they face, or won't seek support. They will, if you extend it in ways that they're comfortable with."

Take an innovative non-profit called Crisis Text Line.'

CTL is exactly what it sounds like -- a service where trained volunteers offer emotional support to people in crisis, through text messages.'

While CTL's earliest adopters were teens and twentysomethings, it is now used by an ever-widening range of people, facing a broad range of issues: Depression, substance abuse, physical abuse, isolation, eating disorders, and more. For anyone experiencing problems, there's a single number they can text: 741741. At any time of the day, it connects them with volunteers who've been trained to help individuals in crisis "move from a hot moment to a cool calm.

CTL launched in August 2013 with little notice and no marketing budget. Earlier this week, it processed its 10 millionth message. Clearly this is a service for which there is a huge and crucially important need. Indeed, as of 2010, an estimated 45.9 million adults age 18 or older in the U.S. experience some form of mental illness. It's more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease."

Easy access to the kind of support CTL provides is a key resource in combating mental illness and other behaviors that put people in crisis, and shifting that support from voice to text has a number of practical virtues. People often find it easier to disclose the issues they're dealing with when they don't have to literally give voice to them. And if a person is contacting CTL from a public space, or even at home when others are present (including, potentially, an abusive parent or partner), texting offers a more private way to seek support."

But these virtues are only part of what make CTL so transformative, and such a model for other tech-based social change organizations to emulate. CTL grew out of DoSomething.org, a non-profit that helps young people organize campaigns designed to produce positive social change, like donating jeans to homeless teens or encouraging Apple to diversify racial representations in its human emojis.'

WhenNancy Lublin, then DoSomething.org's CEO, decided to build out CTL as a separate entity after recognizing that traditional crisis hotlines weren't well-aligned with a generation more comfortable with text, her first hire was a chief technology officer. Her second was a chief data scientist."

In short, Nancy approached the project as an entrepreneur looking to achieve impact at scale by leveraging technology. From the very start, Nancy recognized that CTL could give the best possible support to individual texters by applying insights and strategies gleaned from the organization's entire corpus of conversations. And she also recognized that technology and Big Data analytics would allow her relatively small team to extend support services to more people, faster."

Because the conversations between individuals in crisis and CTL's volunteers occur in a format that's very easy to anonymously analyze, the organization very quickly had access to what a New Yorker profile on the organization described as a "unique collection of mental-health data." And as its user base expands middle-aged men, for example, now comprise 10 percent of its texters its dataset is becoming even more comprehensive.'

As the New Yorker explains, CTL knows that "depression peaks at 8P.M., anxiety at 11P.M., self-harm at 4A.M., and substance abuse at 5A.M." Its software can advise CTL's trained volunteers on the best ways to engage texters who use specific keywords, and suggest local support services where the texter can seek additional help.'

Like any tech-driven enterprise built on data analysis, it can also keep refining and improving its interventions by closely tracking the impact of different approaches.'

Conversations typically last 45 minutes. In a little over two years, CTL has initiated nearly 2000 "active rescues" i.e., situations where police or EMTs were dispatched to stop an imminent suicide.'

When Nancy presented the concept to me, I provided the seed capital to help launch CTL as a standalone non-profit because it shared so many similarities with classic Silicon Valley start-ups. It had a strong entrepreneurial founder with a track record of leading high-impact organizations. (In addition to serving as CEO at DoSomething.org, she also founded Dress For Success, a global non-profit that has helped more than 850,000 women achieve economic independence.) It had a clear product/market fit, and a scalable tech solution. To date, CTL has spent no money on marketing. Users find it through word-of-mouth.'

But while CTL had all the characteristics of an organization poised for rapid impact, even relatively few Silicon Valley start-ups achieve the sort of traction and transformative influence as quickly as CTL has to date. CTL isn't just helping it users save time or money. It's helping them save their lives. And, simultaneously, as CTL shares the data it's generating with researchers, journalists, police departments, schoolboards, and other municipal agencies, it's catalyzing systemic change too."

As CTL continues to expand to meet user demand, I hope others in the tech industry will both support it and be inspired by it.'

At this point, we're all very familiar with canonical consumer Internet companies like LinkedIn, Facebook, Google, Amazon, Airbnb, and countless others, and the positive impacts they've had on how we manage our careers and daily work lives, deepen personal relationships, pursue recreation, and more."

But while venture capital, media speculation, and public discourse tends to coalesce around the hunt for the next massive commercial success, tech-driven entrepreneurship can be equally powerful and dynamic when it's applied to social change efforts that are difficult or even detrimental to commercialize. Data analytics, tighter feedback loops, and network intelligence can improve our lives in ways that aren't contingent on potential profits. Thanks to the work of high-impact entrepreneurs like Nancy, we're beginning to broaden our sense of what is ultimately possible."

ARTICLE: THE POWER OF PURPOSE AT WORK'

In 2002 at LinkedIn, there were very few of the perks that Silicon Valley is famous for. Our company headquarters was my apartment's living room. Free lunches? Yes, if there was an extra yogurt in my refrigerator, or if you consider a can of Coke "lunch." Nap pods, on-site yoga classes, wellness centers, concierge services, or haircut days? No.'

And yet every day my co-founders came to work early and stayed late. We were on a quest to augment search, data analytics, and network connectivity with real identity, reputation, and trust. The goal: Building a platform that creates economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. It was an ambitious vision and it gave us a great sense of purpose.'

In a start-up environment, when teams are small and most everyone who's involved is, by nature, a risk-taker with a desire to create something that will potentially have outsized impact, it's relatively easy to find purpose-driven individuals."

But to become the company we wanted to become, we knew that we'd eventually need more employees, with different skillsets and different temperaments. And inevitably our culture would change. As I and my fellow instructors explain in our Blitzscaling class at Stanford, a company with 100 employees cannot function effectively using the tactics that work for a company with 10 employees: You need an updated playbook."

Still, my co-founders and I were determined to preserve our shared sense of purpose as a core value, even as we grew. In job interviews, and then again, in new hire orientations, we always emphasized our guiding value: Individual LinkedIn members always come first. Any addition or change we make to the platform must improve it in ways that help individual members increase their economic opportunities.'

In emphasizing our philosophy so persistently, we inevitably dissuaded some talented potential hires for whom it did not resonate. But we also attracted individuals who did connect with it, and thus ensured our ongoing cohesiveness even as we started to expand beyond our core team.'

Today, LinkedIn has more than 9200 employees. Needless to say, we've moved out of my living room, into offices in more than 30 cities around the world. Our selection of complimentary beverages has scaled up rapidly."

But while the Wild Alaskan Salmon with Avocado-Corn Relish in our cafe and our 401K matching program make it nicer to work here, a strong sense of purpose remains the defining attribute of our employees.'

In fact, a consultancy called Imperative that publishes a national index measuring how purpose-oriented the U.S. workforce is across industries, job types, and more, recently surveyed 2000 of LinkedIn's global employees. It found that 41 percent of them fit its purpose-oriented profile they prioritize meaning and fulfillment over money and status. That's nearly twice as high as the U.S. tech industry average of 21 percent."

LinkedIn benefits from this orientation in a number of ways. According to Imperative's research, purpose-oriented employees are:"

* 54 percent more likely to stay at a company for 5-plus years* 30 percent more likely to be high performers* 69 percent more likely to be Promoters on Bain & Company's eNPS scale, which measures employee engagement and loyalty"

In The Alliance, my co-authors and I present the "tour of duty" as a mechanism for creating and maintaining engagement in an era when lifetime employment is no longer a given. The key to a successful tour of duty is a high degree of alignment between employer and employee. And the key to a high degree of alignment is a shared sense of purpose.'

When that shared sense of purpose exists, employees stay at a company longer. Their high level of engagement leads to higher levels of loyalty and performance.'

In the old days of lifetime employment, the presumed payoffs were security and predictability. Now, more and more professionals look for positions at companies where they can create meaningful impact and experience personal growth.'

Companies that understand the increasing emphasis of purpose in today's professional landscape improve their ability to attract such employees and also their ability to retain them for longer periods of time."

And of course a virtuous loop inevitably kicks in. At LinkedIn, when I see how thousands of LinkedIn employees are committed to creating economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce, I get even more inspired about where we're headed. Jeff Weiner calls this shared sense of vision LinkedIn's true north. It has guided my own efforts for more than a decade now, and it continues to help us attract and retain exactly the kind of committed professionals who are helping us realize our vision."

ARTICLE: JOSH SILVERMAN JOINS GREYLOCK PARTNERS AS EIR'

It is my pleasure to announce that Josh Silverman is joining Greylock Partners as an Executive-in-Residence. Josh has rapidly scaled and helped run some of the most innovative companies, including American Express, Skype, eBay and Evite, and will bring a wide set of skills and expertise to Greylock. He will wrap up his work as the President of Consumer Products and Services at American Express at the end of the year and will be officially joining Greylock in January 2016.'

Greylocks history with Josh runs deep. Back to the late 1990s, Josh was CEO and co-founder of Evite, which was one of David Szes first consumer Internet company investments. David joined the Evite board and they worked closely on scaling the company together (culminating in an acquisition by Barry Diller and IAC.) I first met Josh in 2000 when I was at PayPal and Josh was CEO of Evite. It was clear to me after my first conversation with Josh that I would always look for ways for us to work together.'

Josh is a seasoned executive with a remarkable ability help companies get to scale quickly. After his time with Evite, Josh went on to join eBay. He had several executive roles with eBay, making his name initially by identifying the opportunity in the Online Classifieds space, and building a leading pan-European business in under two years. He also served as CEO ofShopping.com, which eBay had recently acquired.'

In April 2008, Josh joined Skype, where he re-energized the then-flagging company. Under Joshs leadership, Skype transitioned from being voice-centric to video, doubled its user base and tripled its revenue, expanded to mobile phones and TVs, and struck breakthrough partnerships with other leading companies, including Facebook and Verizon. Josh also led the spinout of Skype from eBay in November 2009 and stayed on the lead the company for another year following. Microsoft announced its acquisition of Skype for $8.5B a few months later.'

We kept in the touch throughout the years and, in 2010, Josh joined Greylock for the first time as an Executive-in-Residence. He worked closely with companies in the Greylock portfolio, consulting on business strategy and growth.'

Josh spotted the opportunity in financial services early on and joined AMEX at a pivotal time, with a mandate to digitize the core, launch new products and expand the relevance of the brand. After four years, Josh has made a great impact on the company, resulting in revenue and profit growth far ahead of the market for his business unit. Josh (and his team) drove a culture of innovation, introducing iconic new products for a broader range of customers, world-class CRM and digital marketing capabilities, and significantly accelerating its lending business.'

Because of the global, networked age, technology companies need to outmaneuver more competitors than ever before. To do it, companies need to scale at lightning fast speed. Josh is the rare executive who knows how to do just this, and we know that during the time he spends with us at Greylock, he will be an asset to many of Greylocks portfolio companies. His focus will be on helping the entrepreneurs in our portfolio think through the challenges of scaling, globalization, disruption, teamwork/culture and leadership.'

ARTICLE: CHANGING THE WORLD, SILICON VALLEY STYLE'

In Silicon Valley few entrepreneurs and technologists dream of changing the zip code, or even the state. Here, the goal is to change the world, building products that millions of people ultimately decide they can't live without."

Not all of these products are created by for-profit start-ups think Wordpress, Wikipedia, and Bitcoin just for starters.'

But it usually requires significant resources to blitzscale from a small team of founders to an organization that can produce massive global impact. So the prototypical Silicon Valley narrative starts with an angel round and ends with an IPO.'

As a result, tech talent tends to naturally flow toward for-profit ventures. Engineers and product managers want to work for fast-growing scale-ups like Airbnb and Uber, or more established entities like Amazon, Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn, because these organizations provide an opportunity to solve hard technical challenges and impact the lives of millions of people on a daily basis. Of course, the salaries, stock options, and other rewards that come with working for such companies are also a motivating force.'

While traditional for-profits may continue to be the best places for full-stack salad bars and complementary onsite haircuts, they're not the only organizations changing the world anymore, or tackling the kinds of difficult technical challenges by which world-class engineers measures themselves. We're also seeing the rise of certified B corporations and public benefit corporations, like Change.org and Kickstarter. And many non-profits and public-sector workplaces are building ambitious and technologically sophisticated services and platforms designed to change the world at scale."

Take Kiva.org, the crowd-funding microfinance platform that empowers entrepreneurs to take control of their own economic destinies. With borrowers in more than 85 countries, Kiva.org is quite literally changing the world with a high-leverage marketplace that currently distributes capital at the rate of one new fully funded zero-interest loan every eleven seconds.'

As global Kiva.org usage continues to grow rapidly, the organization itself is in full scale-up mode. For engineers seeking big challenges and a chance to pioneer how networked microfinancing can make 21st century capital allocation more efficient and more equitable, Kiva.org offers multiple opportunities. In fact, it's currently looking for a vice president of engineering who can oversee a team of 25-plus and develop and execute on the organization's technology roadmap as it expands into new areas and continues to grow its overall loan volume."

The U.S. Digital Service is another organization that offers engineers and other technologists an unprecedented opportunity to pursue meaning and impact at scale. Led by U.S. Chief Technology Officer Megan Smith, the former VP of Google X, the U.S. Digital Service has been described by Fast Company as President Obama's "stealth startup.

Under Smith's direction, staffers who once worked at places like Amazon, Facebook, Google, and LinkedIn are building tools and systems that are helping millions of people manage their lives better by giving them better access to healthcare and student loans, modernizing the immigration process, making it easier to interact with the Social Security Administration, and more."

We are in the midst of an era where non-profits are acting more entrepreneurially and government is getting more adaptive and dynamic. Technology enables many of these changes, but ultimately it's people who envision and implement these new technologies."

It's exciting to see how many talented professionals now understand that opportunities to use technology to change the world at scale extend beyond the bounds of Silicon Valley start-ups.

While most jobs in the non-profit sector don't come with stock options, a tour of duty at a .org that is taking on some of the world's thorniest challenges at scale, or at the forward-thinking USDS, do in fact provide opportunities for individuals to build their skills and expertise in ways that future employers non-profit, for-profit, or public sector alike will value."

I think in particular of Jake Brewer, who died last month in a tragic bike accident. Jake was a senior policy adviser in the Office of Science and Technology Policy at the White House. Before that, he'd been the director of external affairs at Change.org, and also played key roles at the Sunlight Foundation and Code for America. Jake was committed to the idea that technology could inspire civic participation, democratize access to power, and make government agencies and services more transparent and responsive to the needs of all citizens."

He had a boldness of vision, a resourcefulness, and an ambition to tackle massive challenges that any venture-funded start-up would have coveted and been lucky to harness. But he also understood that non-profits like Code for America and government agencies like the Office of Science and Technology Policy have also become key strategic platforms from which to pursue the Silicon Valley dream of changing the world.'

I hope other professionals will be inspired by Jake'svision, and by his legacy, and embark on similar career paths in their pursuit of meaning and impact."

ARTICLE: CS183C: TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED BLITZSCALING: THE VISIBLE SECRET OF SILICON VALLEYS SUCCESS'

Silicon Valley has become a global leader in innovation, technology, and new industry creation. The nearly universal explanation for Silicon Valleys success: entrepreneurs, venture capital, technical universities, existing technology companies which all lead to launching great startups. So, the explanation for the creation of massive new industries is this: Silicon Valley is great because it has a unique ability to create startups.'

However, Silicon Valley is no longer unique in its ability to launch startups. Today, many parts of the world are rich in all of the necessary ingredients. There are bright young technical graduates from universities around the world. Venture capital has gone global. And, technology companies have R&D centers in many areas of the world. There has even been a global expansion of some of the more subtle elements such as a culture acceptance of the potential failure of bold ventures. Through the internet (as with this article!), essential startup knowledge is now available to enterprising entrepreneurs everywhere. And, the belief in entrepreneurship is spreading everywhere in the world creating a receptive culture in many cities.'

So, why does Silicon Valley continue to produce so many industry-transforming companies? The secret has moved past startups to scaleups. As the networked age has increased the competitive importance of speed, the key secret is now scaling up at speed. Two areas of the world do this well with many companies: Silicon Valley and some cities in China.'

When you scale at speed, you can capture the market quickly and also outmaneuver potentially global competition. Given the parallels with military and sports strategies, we can call this blitz-scaling.'

Literally: lightning-scaling.'

And to some degree, this is not a surprise. When you examine the history of iconic Silicon Valley companies, they quickly grew their customers, revenue, and organizational scale to fit a global market. Most of the impact and value creation that Silicon Valley companies produce actually occurs during this scaleup phase.'

Building great, world-changing companies requires more than just building a cool app and raising some money. It requires entrepreneurs to build massive organizations, user bases, and businesses, and to doso at a dizzyingly rapid pace. That's how a Mark Zuckerberg can build a Facebook from garage startup to the world's most popular Internet service in just six years."

This fall, John Lilly and I (along with my friends Allen Blue and Chris Yeh) will be teaching a class at Stanford on how founders can scale up great products into great companies. John is a fellow investment partner at Greylock and the former CEO of Mozilla, Allen and I co-founded LinkedIn; and Chris is my co-author from The Alliance and a long-time startup mentor. We're calling this process "Technology-enabled Blitzscaling" (though we're still trying out other metaphors), to capture the all-out effort that rapid scaling requires. Chris and I are also writing another book, tentatively titled Blitzscaling.'

The class will meet at Stanford each Tuesday and Thursday, from 4:30 - 5:50 PM. Every two weeks, we'll cover a different level of scale, ranging from "household" to "village" to "nation," and points in between. Each unit of the class will include an introductory lecture from one or more of the instructors, as well as conversations with three guest speakers who have personal experience with that level of scale. We've already lined up some great speakers such as Sam Altman, Elizabeth Holmes, Jeff Weiner, Selina Tobaccowalla, Jen Pahlka and many others.'

Some of the critical questions about scaling that we'll dig into:"

What is the role of the founder? What is the role of the CEO? What is the best approach to hiring an executive team? What is the proper role of middle management in the organization? What is the function of the Board of Directors and investors? What is the state of the product? What is the work that needs to be done on product-market fit? What are the roles of sustaining and disruptive innovation? How should you deal with competition? What is the appropriate financing strategy? How should the company make decisions about capital allocation? How should you think about marketing and branding? How do companies scale up customer acquisition? How do different sales models change as the business grows? How should you handle hiring and company culture? What are the major threats to the firm? What are the key decisions and questions? What role do analytics and dashboards play? When and how should you worry about globalization? How do you get the most out of partnerships and business development? How should your technology strategy change over time?'

While the class is primarily for Stanford students, we will be saving a few spots for members of the tech entrepreneur community. Because we anticipate heavy demand for the class, we will be running an application process to select people that a) will benefit the most from the class, and b) are likely to impact the world in the future through applying blitzscale.'

Stanford students can go here to apply: https://airtable.com/shrb80QDjgFhaDsCw'

Community members can go here to apply: https://airtable.com/shr8W8KW44BrUeGe3'

I'm announcing the class so that as many folks as possible have the chance to check their schedules and apply before the application deadline of September 18."

If you do not get a spot in the class, we are also recording all the class sessions and will be making them available to the public.'

I hope this class will shed some light on one of the incredible, yet overlooked aspects of Silicon Valley, and that in the years and decades to come, it will help those who take the course or view the videos to build remarkable, world-changing companies.'

ARTICLE: COMPASSIONATE UTILITARIANISM: BALANCING THE HEAD AND THE HEART IN THE PURSUIT OF PHILANTHROPY '

A review of William MacAskill's Doing Good Better"

No one donates money to try really hard to cure cancer, or deeply empathize with Siberian tigers. The goal is to eradicate cancer. The goal is to save Siberian tigers from extinction.'

And yet while philanthropy is oriented around specific outcomes, it's often driven by emotion more than measurements and analysis. Instead of trying to identify the most leverageable causes through rational evaluation, people gravitate toward the most dramatic and evocative ones."

That's a flawed approach. In his recently published book, Doing Good Better, Oxford philosophy professor William MacAskill evangelizes, dispassionately but engagingly, on behalf of calculated and reflective charitable giving."

MacAskill is a co-founder of the Effective Altruism movement, an approach to philanthropy that might be described as quantified selflessless. "I believe that by combining the heart and the head by applying data and reason to altruistic acts we can turn our good intentions into astonishingly good outcomes," he writes.'

MacAskill presents five simple questions that can help focus philanthropic action:'

In many ways, these questions roughly parallel the kinds of questions investors ask founders seeking funding:'

In both cases, the goal is to gauge and maximize potential impact, so that whatever resources are invested will yield the greatest possible return.'

In his work with his non-profit foundation, Bill Gates has shown how effective an emphasis on outcomes, data, and testing can be when applied to philanthropic ends. In Doing Good Better, MacAskill's focus on rational assessment similarly generates a number of counterintuitive insights and useful propositions."

Take the idea of operational efficiency. One popular way to assess charities involves how they utilize their overall budgets. If they spend relatively little on administration and other overhead, and devote the bulk of their budget to programming, they are dubbed "efficient" and thus worth supporting. And on a certain level this makes sense donors generally aren't that excited to see their dollars going toward photocopying machines and direct-mail solicitations. They'd prefer to apply their contributions to medical supplies, educational facilities, and other resources that will potentially have a direct positive impact on a charity's target recipients.'

But what if an operationally efficient charity's programs have little impact? In MacAskill's estimation, a charity with high overhead may actually be preferable to a highly "efficient" charity so long as the former's programs produce measurably high outcomes.'

In another instance, MacAskill makes a persuasive case for the efficacy of supporting charities that combat malaria. If you live in the U.S. or another comparatively wealthy country, MacAskill argues that you should focus virtually all your philanthropy on poor countries, where your dollars have 100 times the purchasing power that they do in America. Malaria, in turn, claims millions of lives a year but receives relatively little funding compared to how much is spent on cancer and other diseases. Finally, there's an inexpensive but effective way to combat it insecticide-treated bed nets. According to MacAskill's calculations, every $3400 spent on nets saves approximately one life a year."

As important and impressive -- as leverage like that is, there are values beyond maximum leverage that should animate philanthropy. Philanthropy is a fundamentally social act, a form of human connectedness with a deeply embedded emotional component.'

As members of the global community, we should be supporting anti-malaria campaigns especially since such support is highly leverageable.'

But we're also members of local communities, and we have a moral obligation to support philanthropic efforts in those communities too, even if they don't leverage our contributions as efficiently as they might somewhere else."

Local participation in philanthropy isn't just a moral obligation though. It also has its own utilitarian component through strong derivative impact. When you donate locally, you function as a tangible role model to others in your community. You help build networks for action. You form partnerships and alliances with other community members, and position philanthropy as a local norm, a tangible part of the culture that has a compounding effect over time by solidifying community ties, facilitating engagement and collaboration, and creating a tradition of mutual support."

Supporting causes just because they personally resonate with you has a similar benefit. While a favorite cause may not possess the most spreadsheet-friendly metrics, your personal engagement does have value. The personal connection you feel toward a given cause for whatever sentimental or arbitrary reason -- is often what is most likely to escalate your involvement and keep you committed. Emotion is its own kind of lever, one that can build movements that produce massive change.'

Even MacAskill himself acknowledges this to a certain extent. With his colleague Ben Todd, he runs an organization called 80,000 Hours that offers guidance to clients who want to make a difference in their careers. In this pursuit MacAskill continues to exhibit a commitment to rationalism. He talks about the virtues of earning to give, for example, wherein individuals focus on maximizing their earnings rather than, say, taking a low-paying job at a non-profit, with the intent of donating a significant portion of their earnings to philanthropic causes. (As long as you do indeed turn intent into action, this can be a great approach.)'

He also insists that "following your passion is terrible advice." If you're not very good at your passion, you may simply be setting yourself up for failure. If few jobs are associated with whatever your passion may be, that's a problem too. It's also possible that the thing you're most passionate about isn't something that you can leverage to make a difference in the world.'

A better approach, MacAskill suggests, involves finding a job that is a good "personal fit" for you. But while "personal fit" doesn't necessarily involve passion, it does involve finding a position that aligns your interests, aptitudes, and personality type with the requirements of the job and the company culture.'

This parallels the approach to long-term career planning that I advise in my book The Start-up of You. When you're strategizing about the best way to create impact over time, you should take three factors into account: Your personal aspirations; current market realities regarding what industries are growing and what skills employers are seeking; and the unique assets you have to offer."

In the quest for personal fit, MacAskill recommends an "empirical approach" where you "try out different types of work" and learn as much as you can about the different kinds of jobs you think might be right for you.'

Not surprisingly, this advice resonates with me LinkedIn exists to help people improve their economic opportunities and autonomy by providing them with a rich source of network intelligence on all aspects of the world of work. You can use it to learn a great deal about companies and what kind of employees they're looking for. You can use it to interact with people working in the kinds of jobs you're considering, at the specific companies you're targeting."

As MacAskill suggests, this due diligence should be thorough, strategic, and informed by a kind of rational objectivity you're researching a good potential fit for yourself, not just following your bliss."

But that doesn't mean your personal sentiments have been completely banished from the process. In fact, they remain a key driver: "If you're not happy at work, you'll be less productive and more likely to burn out, resulting in less impact in the long-term," MacAskill counsels.'

Emotion and engagement, in other words, are themselves powerful levers so you shouldn't discount them entirely. But of course you shouldn't rely on them entirely either. As Ben Casnocha, co-writer on my first two books, says, "Reason is the steering wheel. Emotion is the gas pedal." In the end, when you are driving toward scale of impact, it helps to have both. This, I believe, is true for job-seekers, it's true for entrepreneurs, and it's true for philanthropists too.'

ARTICLE: VETERANS MEET ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY'

The Department of Defense (DOD) isn't just the nation's oldest federal agency. It's also the nation's largest employer. Between active-duty personnel, civilian employees, and the men and women who serve in the National Guard and Reserve forces, the DOD employs nearly three million people."

Every year, thousands of these individuals complete their military service and transition into the civilian workforce. Today, I was privileged to have the opportunity to meet with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter.'

We talked about what LinkedIn can do to help these veterans showcase the skills and expertise they've developed in the course of their service to America."

We also talked about what we can do to help private-sector companies better capitalize on this source of well-trained and highly accomplished talent.'

Currently, nearly 2 million U.S. service members and veteran maintain profiles on LinkedIn. And Google, Amazon, IBM, GE, Dell, Pepsico, and Chevron are just some of the many companies that use LinkedIn to recruit and hire these individuals.'

One of the ways LinkedIn assists veterans as they transition from the military to civilian life is by offering them a free Premium subscription for one year. Users with Premium subscriptions receive three times more profile views from recruiters and that doubles the likelihood of getting hired through LinkedIn's platform."

LinkedIn has also created a Veteran Mentor Network Group, where more than 90,000 transitioning service members and veterans connect with each other, and with recruiters, as they move from the military into the civilian job sector. To further help veterans during this time, we'll be introducing a free Lynda.com course on managing this transition. That will be available later this year."

In his capacity overseeing the DOD, Secretary Carter has made it a major priority to modernize its personnel systems and strategies. This effort includes revamping how the Defense Department approaches recruitment and retention, as well as increasing support for service members as they seek new opportunities in the private sector that will both draw upon their existing skills and help them develop new ones.'

Related, we discussed the future of certification and better skills mapping, as I've written about previously."

Helping America's veterans continue to grow and prosper in their civilian careers is an extremely important endeavor. I am pleased that Secretary Carter is so committed to this issue. And we continue to look for ways that we can help veterans pursue economic opportunity and achievement."

ARTICLE: A HERD OF UNICORNS'

In the venture capital industry, just picking winners is a losing strategy. The goal is to pick blockbusters, companies that can scale from a team of founders in a garage to a multi-billion-dollar IPO in less than a decade. History has shown that it's primarily these outlying performers that create returns for venture investors, so top-performing fund managers focus on companies that have a shot at growing to this size."

History has also shown that such companies have been extremely rare. To capture that rarity in a single word, Aileen Lee, founder of a seed-stage investment fund called Cowboy Ventures, coined the term "unicorn" in a 2013 Tech Crunch article.'

According to Lee's research, just 39 out of approximately 60,000 U.S.-based software and Internet companies that received venture funding from 2003 through 2013 attained public or private valuations of $1 billion or higher. Lee dubbed them members of the "Unicorn Club." It's an evocative coinage that quickly achieved currency.'

Over the last year or so, however, unicorn sightings have become almost as common as Bigfoot sightings. Fortune, which maintains an online list of unicorns, has identified more than 100 global specimens. CB Insights, a research firm, puts the current global population at over 120.'

As the number of unicorns have grown, so has the skepticism about these billion-dollar maybes. "The billion-dollar tech startup was once the stuff of myth, but now they seem to be everywhere, back by a bull market and a new generation of disruptive technology," Fortune noted. "Some say the proliferation of unicorns is a sign of another tech bubble.

Indeed, if the unicorn is by definition the rarest creature in the universe, how can there be a herd of them? Talk about an ontological oxymoron.'

Certainly, there's froth in current valuations. Some of the companies that claim unicorn status today will ultimately reveal themselves as nothing more than a dependable cash cow, or worse, a resting parrot with beautiful plumage."

But investors who believe that the current size of the unicorn herd is proof positive we're in the midst of a bubble are putting too high a premium on Lee's coinage."

When Lee introduced her concept, she was describing a specific historical condition. In the ten-year period from 2003 to 2013, just 39 out of approximately 60,000 venture-backed U.S. high-tech companies achieved billion-dollar valuations.'

But as the term "unicorn" has caught on, it is no longer being used simply as a descriptor of past performance. It has also acquired an aspect of self-fulfilling prophecy. Unicorns are the universe's rarest creatures -- so if billion-dollar companies are metaphorical unicorns, it follows that only a certain number of them can possibly exist, now and forever.'

But while the metaphor may put an implied cap on the number of billion-dollar companies that can credibly exist, VC firms and other investors are betting on technology, not metaphors. '

In 2003, the iPhone didn't exist. Facebook didn't exist. There were just 800 million global internet users. Since then, we've shifted into what I call the NetworkedAge an era defined by unprecedented global connectivity and the massive new opportunities that creates."

Today, there are 3 billion global Internet users and counting. With tablets and smartphones, they use the Internet far more often, in far more places than they did just ten years ago. Thanks to the rise of social and professional networks, these users are also far more tightly connected than they were in 2003.'

New platforms for instant global interaction exist. Off-the-shelf cloud-computing services that give start-ups capabilities that once would have taken millions of dollars to develop are easily accessible. A variety of easy payments systems are in place. Thanks to these factors, a couple college students can build an application that 100 million users might adopt in a matter of months.'

So ultimately it makes perfect sense that more companies are capitalizing on this new environment to build winner-take-most businesses that investors correctly value at a billion dollars or more.'

And because the start-up world itself functions as a network, winning ideas and approaches are identified, supported, replicated, and refined with breath-taking speed. In the Networked Age, everything accelerates and amplifies. What was once scarce can become abundant. That's true for microprocessors, bandwidth, market sizes, and, yes, even billion-dollar companies. A herd of unicorns is a natural consequence of the new world we inhabit, a sign of a healthy, productive ecosystem at work."

ARTICLE: DRIVING IN THE NETWORKED AGE'

In the six-plus years that Google has been developing self-driving cars, its test fleet has achieved an impressive safety record:Nearly two million miles*of real-world autonomous driving, eleven minor accidents, only one minor injury, withnone of the accidents caused by the self-driving cars themselves(a passenger in a driverless car experienced minor whiplash after being rear-ended by a human-driven car).'

That impressive track record has people projecting when the first commercially available autonomous vehicles will hit the streets. But commercial availability is just a waypoint on the truly transformative journey that lies ahead of us. And that means theres a bigger question we should be considering now. Namely, how soon will it be illegal to operate human-driven cars on public streets?'

At a conference in March, my friend and colleague Elon Musk raised this proposition, exclaiming that people may outlaw driving cars because its too dangerous.'

In a follow-up tweet, Elon clarified that "Tesla is strongly in favor of people being allowed to drive their cars and always will be.

That perspective makes sense. Although Tesla is developing autonomous technologies, its high-performance cars are a blast to operate in a traditional hands-on manner. Many Tesla customers buy the company's cars precisely for this reason, and as a smart and dedicated CEO, Elon will continue to serve his customers well."

But even though I'm a happy Model S owner myself, I also recognize that self-driving cars have the potential to radically reshape the world in ways that will benefit everyone. In the future, getting from point A to point B is going to be safer, faster, more energy-efficient, more economical, and more fun."

In addition, autonomous vehicles will also be able to share information with each other better than human drivers can, in both real-time situations and over time. Every car on the road will benefit from what every other car has learned. Driving will be a networked activity, with tighter feedback loops and a much greater ability to aggregate, analyze, and redistribute knowledge.'

Today, as individual drivers compete for space, they often work against each others interests, sometimes obliviously, sometimes deliberately. In a world of networked driverless cars, driving retains the individualized flexibility that has always made automobility so attractive. But it also becomes a highly collaborative endeavor, with greater cooperation leading to greater efficiency. Its not just steering wheels and rear-view mirrors that driverless cars render obsolete. You wont need horns either. Or middle fingers.'

Already, the car as network node is what drives apps like Waze, which uses smartphone GPS capabilities to crowd-source real-time traffic levels, road conditions, and even gas prices. But Waze still depends on humans to apprehend the information it generates. Autonomous vehicles, in contrast, will be able to generate, analyze, and act on information without human bottlenecks. And when thousands and then even millions of cars are connected in this way, new capabilities are going to emerge. The rate of innovation will accelerate just as it did when we made the shift from standalone PCs to networked PCs.'

So we as a society should be doing everything we can to reach this better future sooner rather than later, in ways that make the transition as smooth as possible. And that includes prohibiting human-driven cars in many contexts. On this particular road trip, the journey is not the reward. The destination is.'

Human-driven cars wont disappear entirely. There will be designated areas where people can drive for pleasure race tracks, larger areas that are similar to golf courses or game preserves, public roads in extremely remote areas, or areas where weather or terrain make it difficult to optimize infrastructure for autonomous driving.'

But the benefits of self-driving cars are so significant that in time the public will demand prohibitions against old-fashioned legacy driving in most public spaces.'

To date, most discourse on driverless cars has focused on their ability to reduce collisions especially fatal ones. In reality, driving is already a fairly safe activity. According to Federal Highway Administration statistics, there are around 189 crashes involving injury or property damage for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the U.S., and only 1.04 fatal collisions per 100 '

million VMT.'

But even though collision rates are low, the fact that we do so much driving means that the real tolls that traditional driving exacts are significant. In the U.S. alone, around 33,000 people a year die in traffic accidents. Globally, there are more than 1.2 million traffic deaths per year, with China suffering around 275,000 and India 238,000.'

And when collisions do occur, its usually the drivers rather than mechanical failure who are responsible. In fact, human error accounts for more than 90 percent of all motor vehicle accidents. Alcohol plays a role in more than 1 in 3 traffic-related fatalities.'

Replacing the most fallible component in the driving experience the human driver will lead to significant reductions in the number of accidents and fatalities that automobility produces.'

Autonomous vehicles equipped with lasers, infrared sensors, cameras, detailed 3D road-maps, and other technologies are able to assess their surroundings in ways that human eyes can't. They can detect objects behind walls. They can accurately estimate distance at speed. They can brake and accelerate faster than humans can and change direction with more precision. They don't drink and drive, text and drive, nod off six hours into a long trip, or experience road rage."

But its not just the capacity of autonomous vehicles to make a fairly safe activity even safer that makes them so transformative. Its that they will substantially reduce fatalities and collisions while simultaneously increasing overall transportation efficiency and decreasing our need to pay attention while driving.'

If thousands of human-controlled cars suddenly started traveling down highways at 90 MPH, with little space between their bumpers, there would certainly be a lot more than 189 collisions per 100 million VMT. If all those drivers also started texting and watching TV, those freeways would likely begin to resemble war zones.'

But autonomous vehicles will be able to pull off such feats. Indeed, their ability to travel at speed with less distance between them can potentially increase freeway capacity by 6 or 8 times.'

A world of networked cars will also mean less idling at traffic lights, no stop-and-go slogs during rush-hour, no endless circling for parking. Commutes will be shorter. Crashes will be rarer so the traffic jams that crashes create will be rarer too. And because crashes will be rare, cars can be built smaller, from lighter materials. If theyre still using combustion engines, theyll burn less gas. If theyre powered by electricity, theyll travel farther on a single charge.'

Any time spent in cars will also be far more productive. According to Harvard Medical School, the average American driver spends 101 minutes behind the wheel each day. There are 210 million licensed drivers in the U.S., which suggests that collectively we spend around 5.3 billion hours a year wondering why that minivan in front of us is going so slow and listening to soft-rock hits from the 1970s.'

Traditional cars liberated us from geography and time. Autonomous cars will liberate us from driving. In the future, motorists will be able to work, sleep, you name it. Watching a game on TV will replace listening to the game on the radio. Enjoying a leisurely meal with a knife, fork, and a glass of wine will replace gobbling down a burger with one hand.'

Drinking and driving wont be a crime it will be an entrepreneurial opportunity. Texting and driving will still be frowned on but only because people will be wondering why you arent Meerkatting and driving. When you use the word gridlock, your kids will have no idea what you mean. But theyll be able to look it up on Google, even if theyre speeding down the highway at 100 MPH.'

Finally, if you find yourself missing the physical pleasures of driving, you're in luck: Just slap on an Oculus Rift virtual reality headset and immerse yourself in a 3D version of Grand Theft Auto. Your daily commute to work will be more tactile and exciting than ever."

On a strictly quantitative level, at least, the man-hours that autonomous vehicles will save each year by making it possible to do other things while driving will far exceed the man-hours they save each year by eliminating fatal collisions. By fully embracing autonomous vehicles, humanity will free up billions of hours to spend in more flexible and potentially rewarding ways. The fact that driverless vehicles will significantly reduce driving-related deaths and the costs associated with them is an extremely valuable aspect of them. But what makes them truly disruptive is not only their capacity to save lives its their capacity to save minutes and hours, and help billions of people live more productively year after year.'

So how fast can we get to the remarkable future that driverless cars promise? Some observers believe that were still at least decades away from a truly autonomous car that can function safely when you throw snow, rain, poor road surfaces and other factors into the mix.'

Meanwhile, according to Elons estimates, there are more than 2 billion legacy cars on the road, globally. Currently, the car industry can only produce around 100 million new vehicles a year. Just from a manufacturing perspective, it could take 20 years to build a new fleet that approximates the one we have now.'

And yet perhaps because announcements like these are coming at such a fast and furious pace, there is still a general consensus to proceed with caution. Two years ago, German automotive supplier Continental AG declared its intention to produce driverless cars that will function with a "zero-percent accident rate." Others suggest that attaining a "four nines" safety level is necessary. That is, these vehicles must operate successfully i.e. not crash at least 99.99 percent of the time they're in operation.'

The emphasis on infallibility is misguided. Even the best artificial intelligence systems will be hard-pressed to completely protect against falling trees, mudslides, and other acts of God. In a world of mandatory driverless vehicles, accidents and even fatalities will continue to occur. To suggest otherwise only sets the stage for class-action lawsuits that could inhibit genuine progress.'

In addition, the truth is that infallibility is not necessary to achieve significant progress. Imagine if we were able to make a complete switch to driverless cars in 2016, and 20,000 driving-related fatalities occurred over the course of the year. This outcome would likely be positioned as an unprecedented epidemic of robot car carnage. But a drop to just 20,000 fatalities in one year would actually represent the largest annual decline in U.S. traffic fatalities ever.'

When we're able to look past our fears about change and our biases toward the DeVille we know, driverless cars will make driving safer just as higher levels of automation have made commercial aviation a remarkably safe form of travel. In fact, the Eno Center for Transportation, a Washington, DC think tank, estimates that attaining a 90 percent market penetration rate of autonomous vehicles will save 21,700 lives a year in the U.S. alone."

But why stop at 90 percent market penetration? Why not take it to 100 percent, as soon as possible?'

Long before software companies existed, the American car industry had perfected the art of the incremental upgrade, a new model each year with new bells and whistles. That template for innovation will be applied to autonomous vehicles, especially by traditional manufactures.'

In other words, theyll gradually add autonomous features until eventually theyll start selling vehicles that offer what Googles first prototypes did i.e. limited self-driving automation, or Level 3 autonomy. These cars will be able to drive themselves for extended periods of time, but will also give drivers the option to assume control when necessary.'

Such cars will share the streets with traditional cars, so the driving environment will be mixed on both micro and macro levels. Given how established traditional car culture is it is literally entrenched throughout the world in millions of miles of roadway this is inevitable. But it is also likely to prove somewhat challenging.'

According to my friend and colleague Stefan Heck, a Stanford professor who is also founder of Nauto, a Silicon Valley startup developing autonomous vehicle technologies, research that Stanford has done shows that drivers resuming control from Level 3 vehicles functioning in autonomous mode take 10 seconds just to attain the level of ability that a drunk driver possesses. And to get back to full driving competence takes 60 seconds.'

Because human drivers have little experience interacting with driverless cars, they also tend to act unpredictably when encountering them. That hasnt been a significant issue to date, because there are so few autonomous vehicles on the road. But as autonomous vehicles become commercially available and their numbers increase, that may change. There is a real potential for an increase in accidents when we first deploy autonomous cars, says Stefan.'

The most obvious detour around this dilemma is to minimize mixed environments. Of course, America is still a country where the right to drive is considered an essential facet of life, right up there with the right to vote and the right to own a firearm. While car sales dropped substantially in the recession, theyre rising again, even amongst millennials who had once been thought to be far more interested in car access than car ownership.'

But the physical act of driving isnt a natural or constitutionally protected right. Its a licensable privilege. In the early days of automobility, we had to establish new infrastructure, new rules, and even new values to make them tenable more police presence, stop signs, traffic signals, sidewalks, one-way streets, parking spaces, speed limits, crosswalks, etc. And it took decades to make the transition, as streets that had once been shared by multiple low-speed users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, horse-drawn carriages, and streetcars, were recast primarily as the domain of motor vehicles.'

This time around, the new mode of transportation won't just be far more powerful than the one it is disrupting. It will also be safer. But if we want to move forward, we will have to let go of the past. And just as we reshaped our world for the first generation of cars, we'll need to create new rules and new infrastructure to accommodate autonomous vehicles as well."

In the early years of the automobile age, no federal or even state rules existed. Instead, individual municipalities had to figure out how best to manage this new form of traffic. A similar dynamic is already emerging with autonomous vehicles.'

On a state level, California, Nevada, and Florida have led the way in passing legislation that explicitly asserts the legality of autonomous vehicles under certain conditions. Last summer, Iowa's Johnson County approved a proclamation that encourages companies to use it "as a primary location for testing driverless car operations.

In Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan is in the process of building a $6.5 million "city" on 30 acres of its campus to test autonomous cars in a simulated urban environment that will reportedly feature complex intersections, confusing lane markings and even mechanical pedestrians jumping from behind parked cars. By 2021, the university hopes to use the information it collects from this site to help Ann Arbor adopt a networked fleet of shared, self-driving cars.'

In England, the New York Times reports, the British government has invested $61 million for trials aimed at making Britain a global hub for testing rules for driverless cars and building the components for these vehicles.'

All of this recalls the early 20th century, when some cities, recognizing the transformative impact cars would have, made efforts to accommodate them sooner rather than later. Detroit, for example was the first city to adopt traffic signals, one-way streets, and many other conventions that helped usher in a new age of automobility.'

The rewards for the places that lead the transition to a next stage of automobility will be substantial. Indeed, if San Francisco took this lead on this, much of the space it currently devotes to accommodating human-driven cars, including parking garages, parking lots, street parking spaces, private garages, and wide streets could be freed up for new housing, which it desperately needs.'

Still, I doubt major transitional initiatives will happen first in San Francisco or even Mountain View. Instead, they'll happen in places that are eager to be the next San Francisco or Mountain View places willing to experiment in largely uncharted ways."

Maybe that's Johnson County, Iowa. Maybe it's Singapore, which is also positioning itself as a place that is giving a green light to driverless car experimentation."

A welcoming attitude is a key first step but there are certainly opportunities to go further than that. To date, most driverless car development has involved trying to create vehicles that can function well in the world that exists now. This is a smart approach that has allowed researchers and entrepreneurs to simply start experimenting, without trying to persuade cities and other institutions to adapt technologies, infrastructure, and regulations that would make it easier for driverless cars to function with maximum safety and efficiency.'

But we're now at a point where progress will happen faster if cities and other geographic regions embrace innovation as strongly as the institutions developing autonomous vehicle technologies."

When a Google car currently hits the road, its largely functioning as a solo actor and doing all the work to decipher the world it is navigating. But technologies that allow cars to talk to each other, through Wi-Fi-like networks that use dedicated short-range communications frequencies, exist too.'

In these vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) networks, cars share information with each other and other smart infrastructure elements traffic signals, sensor-embedded roads, roadside cameras, eye-in-the-sky traffic drones, etc.'

Adding such infrastructure elements is one way that cities could help accelerate the development of autonomous vehicles. Designating some streets or downtown areas as driverless only would be an even bolder and more useful move. Detroit, in other words, has a shot at becoming the Detroit of the 21st century. All it has to do is ban traditional cars from its streets.'

Networked autonomous vehicles will bring new challenges along with new opportunities. Cybersecurity will be an issue. The first self-driving car that gets hacked in some cataclysmic way will generate just as many headlines as the first one thats involved in a fatal collision (especially if its the same car).'

Privacy is also a concern. Still, hacking is already an issue with current on-board systems like OnStar. And such systems are already able to collect information about your driving patterns, how fast you go, and more.'

On a similar note, the Drug Enforcement Administration and many other law enforcement agencies use license-plate cameras to build increasingly comprehensive databases that keep tabs on millions of vehicles over time. Using a feature built into OnStar called Stolen Vehicle Slowdown, police can remotely decelerate a vehicle that has been reported stolen.'

But OnStar and its analogs are optional. Law-enforcement license-plate surveillance relies on a relatively fixed number of data collection points. Autonomous vehicles will literally be able to record and store your every move. And unlike smartphones, you won't be able to leave them behind or disable their GPS if you want to go off the grid for a while. Autonomous vehicles can't function unless you tell them where you're going."

At the very least, the companies developing these technologies will need to be extremely transparent about how they collect and use the data these vehicles generate. And ultimately consumers will likely demand regulations that let them control their privacy especially if human-driven cars are prohibited.'

The algorithms that govern facets of these cars' behavior will also have to be transparent and codified into law. Already, manufacturers are consulting philosophers to help guide how their algorithms make decisions in moments of emergency. For example, should an autonomous vehicle risk hitting a cyclist in its efforts to avoid a schoolbus that is heading straight for it, if choosing the former course of action will likely minimize overall deaths and injuries? If an autonomous ambulance is racing toward a hospital, should it take riskier actions as the patient it's carrying is moving closer to death? And what sorts of preferences should emergency and law-enforcement vehicles be given in general?"

Even in cases of non-emergency, a high degree of transparency is necessary. Every time a passenger indicates a desired destination, an autonomous vehicle must make choices about the optimal route. Presumably, it will do so based on current traffic conditions, as Waze does now. But it's also possible that the companies designing these cars could choose routes for other reasons. For example, advertisers might pay companies to route passengers past their businesses. Passengers with preferred status could receive access to faster streets while others are routed to slower, higher-volume streets."

In some cases, passengers may accept these decisions. You might pay less or receive some other perk if you agree to take the slow route home, or pay more to take the fast one. On a similar note, we will probably see the introduction of literal marketing vehicles, i.e., cars that take you to your destination for free as long as you complete a survey or watch a promotional video of some kind.'

Because the various algorithms that govern car behavior will encompass issues of liability, risk, and morality, no one company should be allowed to simply make up their own rules. Instead, well need to establish uniform rules and standards through public processes. In the same way that we currently have regulations involving emissions standards, safety equipment, and other aspects of car manufacture, well also have regulations that establish the parameters for how the necessary algorithms operate.'

While government will clearly play a role in this regulatory process, we must also consider what limits to place on how government agencies utilize coming technologies. If you become a suspect in a crime, how extensively will police be allowed to examine your driving history? Will law enforcement agencies have the ability to tap into the system and control the routes of persons they want to detain? Public records detailing exactly how such agencies are using whatever capabilities are granted to them will be necessary.'

Liability is another major that must be addressed. Because driver error is most often the reason for collisions involving traditional cars, insurance is currently oriented toward individuals. In driverless scenarios, however, a car's occupants will be functioning as passengers, not drivers. Thus, when accidents happen, who will be held accountable?"

Because most of the companies that produce driverless cars will be large and well-capitalized, the incentives to file lawsuits and to award high-dollar damages will be great. Unfortunately, if the threat of lawsuits is high enough, it could keep companies from offering cars that would ultimately reduce the overall number of traffic collisions and fatalities. Recognizing this, we must start thinking about how to ensure that liability laws fairly compensate victims without unnecessarily preventing the spread of technologies that will lead to better overall outcomes for everyone.'

Throughout the 20th century, traditional cars functioned as engines of personal freedom and prosperity. The highly personalized mobility they provided gave people more access to a wider range of jobs, homes, friends, etc.'

Autonomous vehicles, in turn, promise a new range of capabilities. But as we merge from our old way of driving to a new one, there will be objections. Some people will characterize self-driving cars as an infringement on personal liberty and an individuals ability to fully control his own destiny. Others will raise concerns over privacy and the ways that driverless cars will collect and share data in their pursuit of greater safety and efficiency.'

But autonomous vehicles wont curtail personal freedom theyll amplify it. Autonomous vehicles will extend the convenience of individualized driving to people who arent currently able to obtain driving licenses senior citizens, people with various disabilities, young people. They will let everyone pursue a greater range of activities while they're in transit. They'll speed up transit times and help people forsake transit altogether. (I.E., your car will run errands for you while you stay at home.) They'll reduce the need to actually own a car, and thus release people from the economic obligations of that."

And privacy norms are not a fixed phenomenon. They change over time, in tandem with new technologies, new social standards, new expectations. As driverless technology evolves, well develop features and policies that will allow people to maintain appropriate levels of privacy. But they will also have access to greater transportation capabilities than even George Jetson ever dreamed of.'

An asphalt utopia is on the horizon. It promises streets that will be safer than they were when a tired horse was the fastest means between two points. It promises shorter, more productive commutes. Its time to put the pedal to the metal in pursuit of this vision, and accelerate toward a world where self-driving cars are not just allowed but mandatory in the vast majority of spaces.'

*This post has been updated to reflect more recently released data.'

Photos: Getty Images'

ARTICLE: ENTREPRENEURS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!'

To guide its efforts to increase global health, security, and overall standards of living over the next several decades, the United Nations is officially adopting 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) later this year.'

When people consider sustainability, particularly in the face of overall population growth, they usually focus on issues like healthcare, food production, education, and management of natural resources.'

But entrepreneurism plays a key role in ongoing sustainability too. According to UN Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon, we will need to create 600 million global jobs over the next ten years to employ the eligible workforce. Resilient communities need robust economies that can support schools, healthcare services, local governance, and more.'

And to produce 600 million new jobs, you need entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. Thats why Secretary-General Moon met with a number of Silicon Valley executives and entrepreneurs in San Francisco recently, including myself, to talk about ways to help achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal #8, which aspires to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.'

Creating 600 million new jobs is a massive undertaking. It will require huge numbers of micro-entrepreneurs. And it will require significant numbers of gazelles as well, the kinds of entrepreneurs who, as Endeavor CEO Linda Rottenberg has noted, create the scalable, fast-growing businesses that account for nearly all private sector job creation.'

The Networked Age and platforms like LinkedIn make it possible for entrepreneurs of all stripes to develop the networks of talent, finance, and customers that any new business requires. And as platforms and technologies like Kiva.org, Airbnb.com, and Bitcoin evolve, and as hundreds of millions of people use inexpensive smartphones to join the online world, the potential for unprecedented levels of global entrepreneurship is increasing dramatically.'

In this dynamic and uncharted landscape, the public sector and the private sector must work together. Business leaders must embrace the challenge of bringing new opportunities to new markets in ways that meet the UNs goals for sustainability, inclusivity, and fairness. And government must implement policies and regulations that promote innovation, growth, and creative approaches to long-standing problems.'

Ultimately were not going to create 600 million new jobs in just ten years by maintaining the status quo. An accomplishment of that magnitude will require breakthrough technologies, outlandish ideas, bold bets, and collaboration on a massive scale.'

To that end, Dell CEO Michael Dell, who is also the UN Foundation Global Advocate for Entrepreneurship, is asking other entrepreneurs, business leaders, and professionals to join him in signing a petition at Entrepreneurs Unite and spreading the word about the UNs commitment to global job creation. Im pleased to join him in this ongoing effort, and hope you will do so as well.'

ARTICLE: NETWORKED CURIOSITY: HOW OSCAR-WINNING PRODUCER BRIAN GRAZER USES CURIOSITY FOR CAREER SUCCESS '

In todays rapidly evolving business landscape, the ability to extract key information before your competitors do is a crucial advantage. As Ive written elsewhere, search literacy is not enough to succeed in this world. You need network literacy too.'

And that means developing your aptitude for reading how information flows through different networks of alliance and communities of interest. It means learning to quickly identify sources of expertise, and knowing the key connectors who can put you in touch with the right people in domains outside your own primary field of knowledge. Information is abundant now, but the right information isnt necessarily easy to find. To truly take advantage of the Networked Age and all the resources it can deliver, it helps to cultivate a nimble, collaborative, curious perspective.'

As Oscar-winning Hollywood movie producer Brian Grazer notes in his new book, A Curious Mind, curiosity is one of humanitys most defining traits. But it isnt nearly as celebrated in business literature as creativity and innovation. Instead, its often positioned as a positive but largely inconsequential attribute, the province of bright children and mischievous house pets.'

Grazer sees it differently. After graduating from USC in the early 1970s, he got an entry-level job at Warner Bros. delivering contracts and other documents to Hollywoods top talent. Instead of simply leaving these papers with secretaries or personal assistants, Grazer hit on the gambit of insisting that he had been instructed to hand them off directly to the individuals they were intended for. This way, he had a pretext for regularly meeting studio heads and movie stars. And during these brief encounters he made sure to ask lots of questions about the movie business.'

Once Grazer realized his natural curiosity could help him build relationships and acquire valuable knowledge about how the movie industry really worked, he began to think of it not just as a trait he possessed but rather as a skill or mindset he could cultivate. I turned it into a discipline, he writes. And then I made it a habit.'

Since the late 1970s, Grazer has engaged in what he calls curiosity conversations, seeking out people who intrigue him and speaking with them for an hour. The only rule governing his choices: The people cant work in movies or TV.'

Over the years, Grazer has spoken with astronauts, oceanographers, religious scholars, experimental physicists, professional skateboarders, police commissioners, politicians, NRA lobbyists, CIA directors, futurists, disaster relief specialists, sculptors, human rights activists, archaeologists, and more. As Grazer explains in both his book and in a recent LinkedIn Influencers post, his goal is to regularly disrupt his own point of view through these conversations.'

As you might expect, I strongly believe every professional can benefit from this kind of practice. Curiosity has always been a valuable attribute to possess. But in our knowledge-driven, rapidly evolving economy, the benefits of a permanent beta mindset are greater than ever. And curiosity is a key to that perspective. It can help you make new connections, cultivate empathy for people whose situations and world views are different than yours, and simply keep your mind open and limber.'

The primary goal of Grazers curiosity conversations is not to pitch his ideas or impart his world view to the people he seeks out. Instead, he sees these meetings as opportunities to ask questions. What challenges does the person hes speaking with face on a daily basis? Who do they seek out for advice and inspiration? Grazer cautions not to do overdo it its a curiosity conversation, not a curiosity interrogation. But ultimately hes there to pay close attention, to learn how someone else apprehends the world.'

Of course, the curiosity conversations Grazer describes are just part of his overall information-gathering process. As I often emphasize, developing a network mindset is not about cold-calling strangers. Its about deepening your relationship with trusted confidantes through regular engagement and expanding your range of intelligence and influence in judicious ways.'

And to use Grazers turn of phrase, its about turning curiosity into a habit. Today, tools like LinkedIn make it easier than ever to do that, by giving professionals a consolidated platform where they can keep track of allies and colleagues, research new companies in their industry, etc.'

In the end, what strikes me most about Grazers curiosity conversations are the intentionality and long-range thinking that underlie them. Through these conversations, Grazer has created a mechanism to challenge his own assumptions on a recurring basis. In addition, he doesnt expect or even solicit immediate payoffs. Instead, he simply assumes that the information he gleans might prove useful over time.'

Grazers track record shows that it has. In a business thats so competitive few even attain flavor of the month status, hes been producing Oscar winners and box offices successes for decades. And his output is remarkably varied everything from romantic comedies like Splash to harrowing action thrillers like 24 to serious dramas like A Beautiful Mind and Apollo 13. Clearly, these wide-ranging projects are the product of a curious mind and also an unusually diligent, connected, and strategic one.'

'

ARTICLE: FUELING THE CONVERSATION ON ENERGY POLICIES THAT PROMOTE LONG-TERM GLOBAL PROSPERITY AND SECURITY '

Our world is getting more and more virtualized but ultimately the Networked Age runs on power strips, cargo ships, and Uber trips. And over the next decade and a half, as 2.5 billion people in China, India, and other developing countries come online and join the global middle class, the global demand for energy is going to increase significantly.'

To take full advantage of the opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation that the Networked Age enables, well need new sources of energy, increased energy efficiency, and consideredpolicies to make this happen.'

Thats why Im joining the Advisory Board of Columbia Universitys SIPA Center on Global Energy Policy, a research and analysis organization that provides policy-makers, business leaders, students and the public with a comprehensive and far-reaching perspective on how to achieve a shared energy future that promotes long-term global prosperity, sustainability and security.Led by Jason Bordoff, a Columbia University faculty member who has worked at McKinsey & Co., the Brookings Institution, and the White House, the Center on Global Energy Policy organizes public conversations with todays top energy experts and trains the next generation of global energy leaders.'

Already, the 21st century has seen major shifts in the energy landscape. And these shifts are having profound impacts on geopolitics, the global economy, and the environment.'

Science and technology are unlocking new sources of energy that offer tremendous possibilities and also require careful stewardship. In the United States, breakthroughs in the way we tap shale natural gas have contributed to a decline in greenhouse gas emissions, and US shale oil has led to dramatic drops in gas prices. Solar costs are plummeting, and wind power competes without subsidies in many places with fossil fuels.'

Battery and storage capabilities are improving so rapidly that Tesla predicts an electric car that can travel 200 miles on a single charge will cost only $25,000 in 2020. All of these technologies, coupled with policy initiatives and changing demographics, are leading to major changes. In recent years, oil consumption in OECD countries has been flat or declining.'

At the same time, emerging economies in China, India, the Middle East and Latin America are seeing their energy consumption surge, presenting new challenges not only for their economies but for efforts to address global climate change. Energy poverty leaves 1.3 billion people without access to modern energy services like electricity, more than 95 percent of which live in sub-Saharan Africa or developing Asia.'

And the recent oil price collapse, largely driven by a surge in supply in the U.S., shows how changes that bolster economies in one region can create instability and crises in others, like Nigeria and Venezuela, whose governments rely heavily on oil production revenues.'

The changing relationship between global energy producers and consumers is recasting geopolitical relationships as well. New trade dynamics are emerging, and new alliances are being formed. The U.S. energy revolution means that OPEC countries can no longer control the global oil market in the way they did for decades. From the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the application of Western sanctions against Iran to the South China Sea and the battle against ISIS, energy is playing a central role in some of todays most pressing geopolitical challenges.'

Out of this great global narrative, important questions arise:'

How do we promote geopolitical cooperation rather than conflict as new energy resources are developed in places like the Eastern Mediterranean or East Africa?'

How do we ensure our supplies of energy are securea strategic concern made all the more urgent in the face of the recent Russia-Ukraine conflict?'

How do we promote faster economic growth, not just in the US or Europe, but also in places where electrification means shops stay open longer, schools can hold night classes, and women can more easily find employment outside of the home?'

How do we create the right incentives that encourage countries, companies, and individuals to consume energy more wisely?'

What are the new technologies that have the potential to transform the energy industryfrom transportation and power generation to storage and efficiency? And where will these technologies come from?'

How do we ensure that the new energy technologies we introduce are deployed safely and responsibly, in ways that dont impose negative externalities on the communities where theyre located?'

How do we meet the worlds rapidly growing need for energy without rendering large segments of the planet uninhabitable from the potentially severe consequences of climate change?'

In our increasingly connected world, effectively addressing these questions and others is going to take long-range thinking, trillions in new capital, technological breakthroughs, and smart policies. It is going to require a shared understanding of the issues and cooperation among industry, government, and civil society.'

Energy is among the most highly politicized and polarizing issues of our time. Too often, easy answers and short-sighted slogans are offered in place of balanced analysis and sound insights. Untangling all the relevant issues, looking through the many interests involved, and creating policies that take all these factors into account, can seem impossible sometimes.'

Thats why the discourse and analysis that the Center on Global Energy Policy facilitates is so necessary, and why Im joining its Advisory Board. I encourage people to join the conversation. If youd like to receive timely insights into the issues and opportunities currently shaping our energy future, sign up for the Centers email list. You can also follow the Center on twitter @ColumbiaUEnergy'

ARTICLE: PRESS START TO CONTINUE: ONE MORE ROLE OF FOUNDERS'

When I read that my old friend Mark Pincus has returned to Zynga as CEO, it struck me as an important example of the unique role that a founder plays at a startup. This moment highlights the importance of founders, precisely because Zynga already had a capable and accomplished CEO. Don Mattrick is a seriously experienced and successful executive, whether at EA, where he ran a global collection of studios, at Microsoft, where he launched the Kinect and ran XBox, or at Zynga, where over the past two years, he's led the company through the challenging transition from relying on the Facebook platform to becoming a major player in mobile gaming."

Moreover, Don and Mark have always had a good working relationship. Mark was instrumental in recruiting Don to Zynga, and one of the things I know from my personal conversations with Mark is that he's placed a tremendous value on what Don has taught him, especially in managing a large-scale company and integrating traditional gaming into Internet gaming. So why make a change?"

I think the key lies in the very nature of Don's accomplishments as CEO. By navigating the shift to the mobile platform, Don was able to open up a great set of opportunities for Zynga. But that same shift effectively returned the company back into a startup phase. As an eight-year-old startup, Zynga finds itself in a place where the ability to create popular videogames is necessary but not sufficient. It needs a world-class founders skills. And, in particular, Zynga may now need an Internet founder with the particular skills that Mark has."

Founders have the abilities to scan a complex and uncertain environment, and gather a team that can set out to reach a destination that may be barely visible in the distance. Founders make hard decisions quickly, even in the absence of data, and have the determination to trade short-term pain for long-term gain. It is these attributes among others that led me to name my partner Jeff Weiner one of the co-founders of LinkedIn, even though he joined the company over five years after it was incorporated (companies that endure have many founding moments).'

Beyond being Zyngas founder, what makes Mark particularly suited to leading Zynga right now is that he understands the intersection of a number of key underlying internet technologies such as big data, analytics, and social in addition to having a knack for building fun games. In an early market like mobile gaming, Zynga will need to integrate these new techniques and technologies into its games from inception. While I haven't been a part of the conversation, I imagine that Mark and Don have been talking about these needs (and thus possibly transition) for a while. Having been a founder himself (at the age of 17 no less), Don certainly appreciates the unique things a dedicated founder can do especially founders with experience in specific technologies."

I've known Mark since I was an executive at PayPal, and it's been a delight to watch him evolve as a founder and executive over the last decade and a half. Its been especially rewarding to hear what he's learned from Don these past two years. He comes back with a founders zeal, including starting with a $1 / year salary, which is part of a founders dedication."

ARTICLE: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS'

When youre doing something challenging and risky, theres strength in numbers. Thats why backcountry explorers use the buddy system. Its also why successful start-ups are often the result of close-knit teams rather than a lone founder. And its why its critical for young people just starting out in their careers to find mentors, develop alliances, and always be thinking in terms of investing and broadening their professional networks. Anyone who wants to accelerate their career should actively seek out the help and support of others.'

Thats why its excellent that LinkedIn is partnering with Lean In, the Anita Borg Institute, and Facebook to launch the Computer Science & Engineering (CS&E) Chapter a global network of Lean In Circles that will provide women at colleges and universities a way to network with peers who are also studying, interested in, or already working in the fields of computer science and engineering.'

Gender inequity in the workplace isnt just a diversity problem its a productivity problem. Technology, globalization, and the rise of the Networked Age are creating new opportunities and new challenges. But if we want to take full advantage of these opportunities, and successfully address the challenges that are arising, we need to draw upon the widest possible range of perspectives and experiences -- we need to leverage everyones talent.'

In all industries, we need more women making decisions and creating the products that shape our lives. And this is particularly true in technology, where women are vastly underrepresented. Unfortunately, as statistics show, we are not doing a very good job of equipping women to pursue careers in our sector. Computerworld reports that just 7,594 of the 39,589 CS bachelor's degrees awarded went to women in 2011. And the proportion of women CS graduates from 2008 2011 is the lowest it has been since 1974."

Peer mentorship can help change these stats. As I wrote in our book The Start-up of You, The people you spend time with shape who you are and who you become.'

When we function as part of a small and tightly-knit group of peers, we become more confident. We learn faster. We accomplish more. In the male-dominated realms of computer science and engineering, at both the higher-ed level and in the professional world, women are often seriously marginalized. That has to change. And one way to initiate this change is to create institutions and networks that give women more opportunities to connect with each other, strategize, and share resources.'

Lean In Circles are already helping women enroll in classes they were previously afraid to take. Theyre giving participants the confidence to apply for jobs that take them beyond their comfort level. They are, in short, encouraging women to embrace risk and work collaboratively, to lean into new opportunities.'

I hope that LinkedIn members who are studying computer science and engineering or already working in these fields will consider starting or joining a Lean In Circle in their area. The lifelong relationships that can arise out of such groups are a key resource for anyone to develop and an important tactic for creating stronger, more diverse workplaces that will ultimately lead to a more productive world for all of us.'

ARTICLE: FUELING THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY'

President Obama covered a lot of ground in his State of the Union Address. Childcare. Education. Tax codes. Terrorism. Cybersecurity.'

And the theme that ultimately unites all these different areas, no matter how unconnected they may seem sometimes, is something the president touched upon too: The world and America right along with it -- is shifting from a 20th century economy to a 21st century economy that rewards knowledge like never before.'

At the moment, America is ably navigating this shift. As the president noted, were in the midst of strong job growth 11 million new jobs over the past five years. In part, Americas strong economic performance is being driven by lower energy prices - the United States is now the worlds largest producer of oil and natural gas.'

But as crucial as natural resources like oil and gas have been to Americas economic recovery, were living in a 21st century economy now. And in a 21st economy, thanks to increasingly powerful distribution networks, information and goods can get commoditized in record time. Even entire industries can become commoditized. In this kind of highly connected, highly mobile economy, innovation matters more than ever. And innovation arises out of human capital people. In the 21st century economy, which is itself an outgrowth of what I call the Networked Age, prosperity flows toward countries that have the most creative and adaptive workforces.'

President Obama understands this -- and thats why his vision of America and middle-class economics emphasizes faster Internet access, more affordable higher education, and more apprenticeships.'

In short, the president called for investment in connectedness and collaboration.'

As a country and as individuals, this is exactly what we should be doing. While global competition and rapidly evolving market conditions have turned the notion of lifetime employment into a 20th century artifact a topic my co-authors and I address in greater depth in The Alliance - the technologies and platforms that power the Networked Age are creating unprecedented opportunities for all Americans to increase and enhance their economic choices.'

Crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter and Kiva give aspiring entrepreneurs access to capital that traditional banks cant match. Plug-and-play ecommerce platforms like eBay, Alibaba, Etsy, and Shopify give anyone a chance to sell goods to customers around the world. Sharing economy platforms like Airbnb and RelayRides help people leverage underutilized assets into new revenue streams. LinkedIn gives people the opportunity to hone a professional identity, deepen their relationships with allies and potential allies, and tap into a rich web of real-time information that can help them navigate their careers with greater insight and strategic intent.'

The Networked Age rewards specialized skills the 21st century economy needs software developers, data scientists, and support specialists. As President Obama underscored in his speech, two out of three jobs will require some higher education by the end of the decade. To address this fact, he wants to make community college free, just like high school.'

While this may be the right path for some, other options are evolving rapidly as well. Many of the specialized skills that employers are currently seeking dont actually require four-year or even two-year degrees. Dev Bootcamp and many similar organizations are teaching programming and other high-tech skills in concentrated programs that last just ten weeks. Coursera, Udacity, and EdX are offering an ever-widening range of free or low-cost online courses that teach relevant 21st century skills. All of these options can help broaden access to digital opportunity and make the high-tech world more inclusive and more diverse.'

To make the 21st century economy work for everyone and ensure broad-based prosperity, we need big Internet pipes the Networked Age depends on bandwidth. As the president noted, we need to build the fastest networks, so that the next generation of digital innovators and entrepreneurs have the platform to keep reshaping our world.'

Unfortunately, the average Internet connection speed in the U.S. today is only around 10 Mbps. For those of who remember the dial-up era, that may seem incredibly fast. But if we truly want to realize the benefits of online education, telemedicine, and all the other promises of a more immersive and three-dimensional Internet, America should increase its average bandwidth capacity by orders of magnitude. 100 Mbps needs to be the new normal.'

At the moment, there are more than five million open jobs in the U.S. One way to decrease the skills gap that underlies this statistic is through apprenticeships.'

Recognizing how effective apprenticeships are across the U.S. 87 percent of the people who successfully complete formal apprenticeship programs find a job in their field, with an average starting wage of $50,000 President Obama has made it a goal to double the number of people who are registered in official apprenticeship programs. Last year, he earmarked $100 million for the American Apprenticeship Initiative, a program that will issue grants designed to spur the development of apprenticeship programs in high-growth industries like information technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing.'

As Ive covered in the past, employers have shown that they highly value internships one 2013 poll revealed that they view an internship as the single most important credential for recent grads. In other words, relevant, proven experience matters. And formal apprenticeships, which typically last longer than internships, feature more specific training, and pay participants, are another effective and reliable way to help people acquire skills that employers truly value.'

So I hope President Obama will continue to seek opportunities to expand programs like the American Apprenticeship Initiative. And, similarly, I encourage business leaders and employers to seek out opportunities to partner and participate in such programs. At LinkedIn, for example, weve created a program to help U.S. veterans find employment.'

The 21st century economy thus far has been fueled by collaboration and networks of alliance. In his call to bridge divides and unite in common effort, its clear that President Obama recognizes that we are, thanks to the Networked Age, more tightly connected than ever before. This creates new tensions, but it also creates new opportunities to work together in ways that benefit us all.'

'

ARTICLE: WHEN THE DISRUPTION HITS THE FAN: WHY THE NEW REPUBLIC HAS TO STOP BEING SO CONSERVATIVE'

"The New Republic is frankly an experiment," its editors wrote in its debut issue, which appeared a little over 100 years ago in November 1914.'

The experiment got off to a shaky start. The first issue sold just 875 copies. At the newsstand rate of ten cents a copy, net proceeds were $87.50. While circulation rose in subsequent issues, the magazine persisted largely through the support of its main benefactor, a wealthy heiress and philanthropist named Dorothy Payne Whitney who poured $80,000 a year into The New Republic for the first decade of its existence.'

In 1924, struggling to attract new readers, the New Republic offered potential supporters an almost Kickstarter-like deal -- a series of six fine art etchings and a two-year subscription for $12. However many people took advantage of this innovative promotion, it wasn't enough. The New Republic declared bankruptcy that year. (Today, that set of etchings -- including one by Edward Hopper -- goes for around $90,000.)"

But Dorothy Payne Whitney continued to support the publication, and ultimately, the New Republic lasted long enough to qualify as an American tradition through a combination of elements the strength of its content, a succession of patient benefactors who followed in Payne Whitney's wake, and the circumscribed landscape it operated in. If the audience for lively but in-depth public affairs coverage was limited -- the magazines circulation never rose higher than a little over 100,000 subscribers -- the number of institutions that both wanted to produce such material and had the capacity to achieve national print distribution on an ongoing basis was limited as well."

That changed radically in the late 1990s. Suddenly, thanks to the web, there was lots of lively but wonky public affairs coverage -- from armchair pundits, from economists and law professors, from campaign staffers. It was timely, it was largely free of charge, and it was often quite good. In the face of this new competition, the New Republic's paid circulation started plunging. On the cusp of the new millenium, it had 101,000 paying subscribers. By the time Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes bought it in 2012, that number had fallen to 34,000."

Long before Chris arrived, the magazine had recognized the need to adapt to the new realities online distribution was creating - a 2007 New York Times article notes its decision to reduce its annual number of print issues from 40 to 20, add web-only staff, introduce more visual elements, experiment with video, and emphasize "buzzy" articles.'

But institutions that have been around as long as the New Republic often face what Harvard business school professor Clayton Christensen famously dubbed the innovator's dilemma -- i.e., the tension that arises when longstanding companies confront immature but potentially powerful technologies that don't necessarily fit into their proven and familiar ways of delivering value to their traditional customers. While the New Republic's traditional mode of operation may have kept it on precarious financial ground throughout the course of its history, it did work well enough to keep the publication afloat for 100 years. Thats no small feat and hard to let go of, even when conditions change so much that you must adapt."

After Chris arrived in 2012, he doubled the magazine's staff, added new digital features, and announced his intention to generate enough revenue to compete in an increasingly crowded and technologically driven landscape."

And yet even as the magazine's staff appeared enthusiastic about the possibilities of this new era, they apparently never managed to fully embrace the permanent beta mindset you need to stay competitive in todays fast-changing world. You can see this in the letter that many of its former employees published last week, after quitting in the wake of the news that Chris had been planning to replace the magazine's highly regarded editor, Franklin Foer, with former Gawker and Atlantic Wire editor Gabriel Snyder."

The New Republic "is not, or not primarily, a business," the former staffers wrote.'

Or to put it more succinctly, they were comfortable doing what they'd always done, what had always sort of worked."

The problem, however, is that conditions have changed. Its not just about The New Republic and how things have always been done there. Its about the entire news media ecosystem in which The New Republic operates. In this new environment of abundant competition, even the most generous benefactor cant ensure a publications survival.'

The world of news media is in a tremendous state of upheaval, which means it's also tremendously dynamic. Traditional institutions like the New York Times and the New Yorker are making bold and risky efforts to adapt to the changing realities of the business. Newcomers like Buzzfeed, FiveThirtyEight, Vox, and Vice are pioneering new ways to engage users and develop sustainable businesses in an age of mobile distribution and social sharing."

In this new era of ambitious and abundant journalistic experimentation, stasis guarantees irrelevance. Instead of invoking past legacies, its a time for adaptation, new thinking, an appetite for risk.'

The kind of substantive public affairs coverage The New Republic has specialized in is an essential part of our national discourse and no one wants to see that disappear. Instead, the opposite is true. Now, there are opportunities to broaden its readership, amplify its voice beyond the realm of Washington insiders, and increase its overall impact. But thats not going to happen by adopting a stubborn stagnate-or-die! mindset.'

In any era, the best magazines are intensely contemporary phenomena, the ones that capture and define the moods, preoccupations, anxieties, and aspirations that are most particular to a given cultural moment. When magazines invoke their storied traditions, when they prefer to look backward rather than forward, they start to ossify.'

"The New Republic is frankly an experiment," its editors wrote in 1914. One hundred years later, the experiment continues, and that is good news for the future of journalism.'

'

ARTICLE: EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND THE ALLIANCE'

Mutual benefit is the fundamental characteristic of an alliance in the workplace. Ideally, by working together, the employee transforms his career and the company transforms its business.'

When an employee evaluates what he or she stands to gain in this alliance, the cash and equity compensation the company offers should be one of the benefits. But it should not be the dominant benefit.'

Cash compensation and equity is part of the employee's financial capital. In contrast, our book The Alliance focuses on how the company will help increase the employee's human capital by making him more valuable and employable through acquiring important skills, experiences, and connections."

These soft assets (as we referred to them in The Start-up of You) accrue as the employee pursues and accomplishes his mission, and enable career growth in a way that simply making more money cannot. The smart long-term strategy for an employee is to optimize on building up human capital instead of optimizing for maximum short-term cash: unique skills, powerful experiences, or a deep professional network. These assets have a longer-term pay-off if leveraged well.'

The company also wins when employees develop soft assets, of course. Employees who have up to date skills and networks do better work on the job.'

One of the ways a company and employee organize the soft asset plan is by committing to a tour of duty that has a meaningful mission objective. An example mission objective could be a product launch or scaling some initiative to a certain level over a finite time period. Theres mutual benefit here, too. For the company, employees who commit to a tour of duty because of a meaningful mission will outperform those who are simply seeking cash-for-time. For the employees, they will be most happy and fulfilled if theyre involved in meaningful, high-impact work. Various research on employee engagement and employee happiness support these claims. In Silicon Valley, we call it having missionary rather than mercenary employees, and our innovation culture depends on it.'

All this said, to ignore cash compensation in the context of the alliance is foolish. Regardless of how much they love their jobs or how meaningful the mission, most people would quit instantly if they were told that from now on, they wouldn't be paid. Soft assets are critical for long-term value, but you cant use them to pay the mortgage."

In a separate but related conversation to the tour of duty conversation, the manager and employee discuss the compensation package, which generally includes a salary or hourly rate, and might also include things like healthcare, 401k matching, and incentive compensation. The most common incentives include stock option or RSU grants, which vest over time, and bonus plans, which are calculated annually. Salespeople also often receive a commission based on how much they sell. In larger organizations, the broad structure of employee compensation tends to be set, for scalability reasons; personalization and negotiation between manager and employee happens within that structure.'

All of these compensation systems serve the goal of alignment. Just as an alliance should align the interests of employee and company by providing the opportunity for soft asset growth and a meaningful mission, the compensation system should align the cash compensation with the value created by the employee accomplishing the mission. Ideally, monetary compensation gets adjusted up or down based on performance over the duration of a tour. Typically, monetary compensation (salary, bonus or long-term incentives like stock options or RSUs) is reviewed annually to allow for some adjustment and alignment. With more meaningful and honest 1:1 conversations between managers and employees, which we espouse in The Alliance, employees can better understand what they make and how they make it.'

In the end, no compensation system is perfect. How many of you think that you are paid exactly the right amount? The alliance doesn't change that fact. What it does do is to help a manager build a stronger relationship with your employees by contextualizing compensation details in an intelligent, more general career conversation."

Q: Im an individual manager. I dont fully control compensation for my employees. How should I deal with compensation when I lead a career conversation with one of my team members?'

A: Individual managers can face constraints when negotiating compensation with employees. Oftentimes, HR sets and enforces a company-wide compensation policy or management enacts budget constraints that curtail compensation increases across the board. Still, managers have the ability to tout their employees accomplishments and almost always exercise some level of discretion. Furthermore, managers should focus on the elements of compensation that they do completely control. For example, you can still help your people grow their soft assets. As a manager you can define a mission that aligns well with the employee's aspirations and values and which helps advance his career. On an ongoing basis, you can help the employee acquire useful knowledge and skills, build his personal network, and burnish his personal brand with speaking and thought leadership. This is true even if your organization doesnt adopt the alliance framework!"

Q: Should the company pay a loss of optionality bonus for the employee if hes taking himself off the job market during his tour of duty?'

A: The alliance framework does not imply there should be a special loss of optionality bonus for an employee who signs up for a tour of duty. But it does imply that there should be a vigorous, honest discussion between manager and star employee about the nature of their commitment to each other.'

By signing up for a tour of duty, both company and employee gain short-term and medium-term predictability. This is what lets both sides invest in each other with confidence over the course of the tour. As such, even though this isnt a legal agreement, breaking the tour of duty commitment represents an ethical violation.'

Of course, talented employees will always be sought after by other companies, and sometimes employees will come upon a truly transformational career opportunity at a different company that would justify them ending their tour with you early.'

As a manager, you should aspire to get to a place where your employee will talk to you first before seriously exploring alternative career offers in the middle of a tour. After all, if an employee is so unsatisfied or uninspired on his current tour that he feels compelled to be interviewing elsewhere, better for you to know about it as early as possible so you can potentially redefine the tour of duty, redefine the relationship into a short term, month-to-month transitional one until a new tour can be defined, or help the employee amicably transition out of the company altogether. You earn this right of first conversation by showing the employee that youre truly committed to his career transformation and not simply motivated to keep him at your company as long as possible.'

As a manager, be specific with your employee on how your alliance deals with certain tactical scenarios, such as interviewing elsewhere during a tour. For example, is it acceptable for the employee on a tour of duty to answer the phone when a headhunter calls? Is it acceptable to take a day off to interview at another company if the employee is already on a long-term commitment with his current employer? The manager and employee need to arrive at a mutually agreeable decision on this and other potentially sticky situations. While managers may be tempted to consider any contact with another company as a violation of the ethical pact, keep in mind that one way an employee can better understand his market value and the quality of his current career opportunity is by talking to other companies, so to explicitly bar that activity would not be in the spirit of the alliance. Different managers may have different standards, but all managers should be clear about expectations.'

Q: If a tour of dutys mission lasts multiple years, should compensation be set for multiple years? Why set compensation annually?'

A: Today's compensation systems, with stock option and RSU vesting, 401k match vesting, and so on already reward employees for staying over the long term. These kinds of systemic, standardized incentives are good because it does make sense to think about compensation in the context of long-term missions."

That being said, even if a tour of duty is expected to last more than a year, we suggest regular check-ins and tweaks as necessary. The goal of the tour of duty framework is to provide greater adaptability; locking in compensation could lead to a misalignment of compensation and responsibilities. In this sense, re-visiting compensation on an annual basis is not necessarily at-odds with a long-term tour of duty.'

Q: In a classic compensation negotiation, theres information asymmetry between employer and employee. The company has access to all the companys compensation records in addition to market data from commercial providers. The employee meanwhile doesnt even know what his co-workers make, let alone broader market trends. Doesnt this information asymmetry erode the trust thats necessary for the alliance framework?'

A: Indeed, transparency and honesty are necessary for a true alliance.'

Companies should be transparent about how they determine compensation (while preserving the confidentiality of other employees). Managers should share the data theyre relying on to determine compensation benchmarks. If candidates and employees expect companies to be open with them, then they should be ready to reciprocate by being open about their compensation history, competitive offers, and the information theyve gathered through their networks and readily available reported data.'

As we put it once in an interview, the ideal scenario is for both parties in a compensation negotiation to show all of their cards to each other, thus cooperatively determining the fair market rate as effectively as possible.'

By framing this negotiation as a puzzle to be solved, rather than a battle to be won, both parties can work together, rather than at cross-purposes. Of course, at the end of the day, you do have to set a final number. The goal is simply to find a number that reflects the mutuality of a transformative alliance.'

Q: How do I handle compensation when introducing the alliance to current employees who are already on an undocumented tour of duty?'

A: For existing employees who are not on a defined tour, we recommend that you introduce the tour of duty process by defining the non-compensation benefits to the employeethe human capital gains around skills, experiences, and connections that can lead to career transformationand leave the current monetary compensation system in place. This reduces uncertainty for both company and employee.'

When it is time to define an employee's next tour of duty, you'll have the opportunity to work compensation into the discussion. In most cases, milestone- or achievement-based incentives will best align the interests of the employee and the company around accomplishing a specific mission. Transform the company, and be rewarded--that's the kind of compensation that helps attract entrepreneurial employees."

This post was co-authored with Ben Casnocha, and Chris Yeh. To continue the discussion with us on this topic, please join our LinkedIn Group.'

ARTICLE: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND COMPETITION IN PETER THIELS ZERO TO ONE'

In his book Zero to One, my friend and former colleague Peter Thiel lays out an ingenious, provocative, and highly entertaining argument regarding the virtues of monopoly and the shortcomings of competition. He makes his case so deftly that I suspect it will soon attain the implacable majesty of conventional wisdom. That would be a shame.'

While Zero to One offers a revelatory perspective on the nature of entrepreneurship, it also downplays the defining characteristic of our era. Were in the midst of the Networked Age, connected as never before through devices, platforms, and shared data. Networks create compounding feedback loops, amplifying the frequency, velocity, and reach of human communication. And as we increasingly organize our lives around networks, we are only going to see more collaboration, more cooperation, and perhaps most importantly, more competition. Thats an extremely promising trend.'

In his book, Peter asks his readers, What important truth do very few people agree with you on? Twisting that a bit, one important truth I disagree with Peter on is the importance of competition (and its closely allied forces, collaboration and cooperation) in a dynamic, healthy society.'

Zero to One grows out of a course on startups that Peter taught at Stanford University in 2012. Written with Blake Masters, who was a student in that class, Zero to One is, in its narrowest definition, a book about entrepreneurism. More broadly, its a book that teaches you how to cultivate revelation and truth-telling. As an entrepreneur, Peter wants to create highly profitable companies. As a human being, a thinker, he wants to get beyond complacency and self-deception and pursue the fresh and strange -- ideas so out there and ahead of the pack that they leap the bounds of incremental growth and deliver the kind of breakthrough progress that will truly benefit society at large.'

Nothing will come of nothing, King Lear proclaimed. But in Peters estimation, the worlds best entrepreneurs pull off what Shakespeares conflicted venture capitalist found unfathomable, and entrepreneurism, in its highest form, is a radically generative act. Doing what we already know how to do takes the world from 1 to n, adding more of something familiar, Peter writes. But every time we create something new, we go from 0 to 1. The act of creation is singular'

When you bring something startlingly new into the world, you have a shot at attaining what Peter dubs creative monopoly a product or business so unprecedented and so good at what it does that no other firm can offer a close substitute.'

Often, monopolies benefit their owners at the expense of the rest of the world. But as Peter points out, Creative monopolists give customers more choices by adding entirely new categories of abundance to the world. Creative monopolies arent just good for the rest of society; theyre powerful engines for making it better.'

Companies that produce creative monopolies can set their own prices, and thus reap great profits. But these great profits dont just benefit the companys owners. Profitable companies have more capital to re-invest in creating more great products theyre the innovators that drive progress. In addition, they have the resources to pursue greater social goods. Or as Peter puts it, theyre successful enough to take ethics seriously without jeopardizing [their] own existence.'

In contrast, Peter suggests, companies in competitive industries are engaged in a daily brute struggle for survival. Margins get lowered. Profits disappear. Competitive companies have little or no capital to invest in research and development, lowering their carbon footprints, or providing childcare services to their employees.'

As an entrepreneur and investor, I find Peters perspective on creative monopoly compelling. Of course I want to invest in companies that offer hard-to-duplicate, highly profitable products and services. I also agree that such companies can be powerful engines for culture-wide progress.'

Ultimately, though, I stop short of fully embracing at least one aspect of Zero to Ones worldview. On a granular level, Peter obviously understands the importance of collaboration and cooperation he devotes a chapter of his book to the mechanics of mafia and stresses the importance of creating closely-knit teams of true believers who function as conspirators, not just colleagues. And though Peter is one of Silicon Valleys most well-known libertarians, he encourages founders and would-be founders not to fall into delusions of Randian self-sufficiency. There is no Galts Gulch, he advises, evoking the hero of Ayn Rands novel Atlas Shrugged. There is no secession from society.The single greatest danger for a founder is to become so certain of his own myth that he loses his mind.'

At an institutional level, however, Peter puts forth what Id call a business-oriented spin on Great Man Theory. In his estimation, it is only a few exceptional companies that truly make a difference. These organizations stand apart from the crowd. Theyre uninfluenced by market trends. They think differently because theyre not even listening to what anyone else is saying. Theyre wholly absorbed in their own heroic, singular acts of creation.'

In a recent Fortune magazine profile, Peter noted how the world of bits has outpaced the world of atoms in terms of progress over the last 40 years. One of the most significant factors driving this trend is that the world of bits aka Silicon Valley is such a tightly connected place. Silicon Valley is so massively generative because it has itself functioned as a network, a platform where disparate companies routinely develop formal and informal synergies with each other. Instead of operating in insular silos of epic self-generation, Silicon Valley companies promiscuously cross-pollinate extending and upgrading each others code, optimizing each others hardware innovations, creating increasingly productive economic ecosystems around shared standards and platforms. In Silicon Valley, Atlas hugs.'

At various moments, various players attain creative monopolies, but only within this larger, ongoing framework of co-opetition. And laborious iteration -- progress measured in decimal point upgrades, not moonshots -- has been a hallmark of the Valleys exceptional long-term achievement as well. If wed all simply waited for inspiration to strike Steve Jobs a second time between the Apple II and the iPhone, we might have been playing Castle Wolfenstein for eternity. Instead, competitors swarmed to take advantage of the valuable commercial market that the Apple II pioneered, incremental advances ensued, and eventually, we got computers that were smaller than calculators and more powerful than mainframes.'

The Internet itself has provided one of the most striking examples of co-opetition, incrementalism, and networked innovation. Instead of leaving the future of online consumer information services in the hands of Golden United Life Insurance, the Columbus, Ohio company that introduced the pioneer online service CompuServe, myriad entities organized their efforts around the shared resources and standards of the Internet and created, in incremental and often underwhelming steps forward, the most transformative communications platform in the history of the world. To get to where we are today, we sometimes had to be satisfied with the blink tag, the 56k modem, and other modest breakthroughs, but in time, differences in degree turn into differences in kind.'

This doesnt mean moonshots arent seriously important. They are. This doesnt mean thinking boldly isnt critical. It is. Todays entrepreneurs and investors must aspire to big, world-changing ideas. And in Zero to One, Peter has done an exceptional job of articulating the case for this with provocative clarity.'

But it also seems like a missed opportunity not to emphasize the overall cultural value of competition and its analogs -- collaboration and cooperation -- at precisely the moment when network technologies are amplifying these forces. As an entrepreneur, you should certainly try to identify new products, new services, new solutions. You want to differentiate your company, and creating a new market, where there are viable customers but no real competition yet, is always the ideal.'

No one operates in a silo for long anymore. Instead, we collaborate and compete -- for talent, finance, customers, attention, etc. And if youre an entrepreneur, your strategy must incorporate this central fact. As Peter would be the first to tell you, a counter-intuitive perspective is never its own reward. In the end, its only valuable when it leads to a secret truth others dont yet perceive, a truth with an upside. And the great truth of our times is that we live in a networked world.'

ARTICLE: PRESIDENT OBAMA'S IMMIGRATION ACTION: FIRST STEP TOWARD A MORE VITAL AND PROSPEROUS AMERICA"

Last night President Obama explained the steps that the Administration will take to initiate long-needed reforms to our nations immigration policy. Essentially, around 4 - 5 million undocumented immigrants who meet certain criteria will be able to come out of the shadows and obtain relief from deportation for as long as three years.'

We are undoubtedly a nation of immigrants, and every day I work with and encounter immigrants from every part of the world who are contributing to our society and our economy. While the Presidents proposed executive action wont grant citizenship to anyone, it will give millions of ambitious and hard-working immigrants a chance to participate more fully in American life.'

Those of us who endorse comprehensive immigration reform will continue to advocate for a longer-term legislative solution. But President Obamas plan does constitute a crucial step forward.'

With this change in policy, millions of people will have an opportunity to live more openly, and thus more productively. Theyll have less reason to stay under the radar, and more flexibility to contribute to our nation by pursuing jobs, obtaining training and education, and starting businesses. This new policy will give millions of people a chance to become fully engaged participants in Americas economic and cultural life.'

Ultimately I believe that this policy and future immigration reform legislation will create benefits for all of us who are privileged to live here.'

'

'

ARTICLE: THE FUTURE OF THE BITCOIN ECOSYSTEM AND TRUSTLESS TRUST WHY I INVESTED IN BLOCKSTREAM'

Bitcoin is often characterized in the media as a volatile virtual commodity that can optimize speculation even more efficiently than gold, securitized subprime mortgages, or tulips. Thats not how I think about it. For me, Bitcoin is a transformative addition to Internet communication protocols that will create new networks of trust, fuel massive economic ecosystems, and create enduring long-term value.'

Beyond arguments over whether Bitcoin functions more like a commodity or a currency is the fact that it introduces the blockchain, a distributed ledger that resides on tens of thousands of servers around the world. Every time one party exchanges some amount of bitcoins with another party, this transaction is checked against this public and permanent record of every Bitcoin exchange that has ever happened.'

The blockchain creates the possibility of trustless trust. Parties no longer need to know or trust each other to participate in exchanges of value with absolute assurance and no intermediaries. So the blockchain greatly reduces the need for third-party payments processors and the fees they charge. It eliminates the possibility of credit card fraud. It creates new possibilities for micro-payments. (You can send someone a fraction of a bitcoin, with transaction fees so disruptively low, that the Wall Street Journal or New York Times could effectively charge a penny to read a single article. AMC could charge a quarter to watch the latest episode of The Walking Dead commercial-free.) The blockchain makes all kinds of cross-border commerce easier, especially when it involves places where there arent credit card networks or robust banking systems.'

The blockchain protocol doesnt just enable the trustless exchange of bitcoins. It enables the trustless exchange of any kind of digital asset domain name signatures, digital contracts, digital titles to physical assets like cars and houses. Its also possible to attach various conditions and potential actions to digital assets stored in the blockchain i.e. Bitcoin is ultimately a programmable currency. It can be used to create automatically executable wills. It can automate dividend distributions and escrow and notary services.'

All in all, the idea of the blockchain, and the kinds of transactions it enables, is a foundational addition to the Internet that has the potential to massively expand the ways we interact with each other.'

Whats even more remarkable about Bitcoin and the trustless trust architecture it introduces is that its open source, a technology that no one company controls to its advantage, a public good. This characteristic is foundational to Bitcoins value and success to date. But it also means that advances to Bitcoin Core, the software at the heart of the system, happen slowly. Volunteer developers work on the project on their own time. Changes are only implemented when consensus amongst Bitcoins development community is achieved.'

Currently, the hundreds of millions of dollars of venture capital that are being invested in Bitcoin companies go toward top-layer products and services, like Bitcoin wallets and Bitcoin exchanges. These products and services are extremely valuable, making it easy for individuals users to obtain and use bitcoins and because theyre attracting so much investment, theyre improving rapidly.'

To match this pace, Bitcoin Core needs investment and innovation, too. Right now, however, were mostly seeing developers with innovative ideas that could potentially broaden the core functionality of Bitcoin create their own forked cryptocurrencies. These alt.coins are inspired by Bitcoins approaches and code, but they operate independently from one another.'

While these alt.coins create interesting new possibilities, Bitcoin is the platform where users, merchants, and entrepreneurs are congregating. Its where the momentum is. Thats why its so important to promote development efforts that increase the power and flexibility of Bitcoin Core, and to do so in a way that keeps Bitcoin open, accessible to all users and developers, a public good.'

In pursuit of this public good, I have personally invested in a start-up called Blockstream. After extensive discussion with my partners at Greylock, we decided this approach was the best way to achieve our long-term goals for the project. In this instance, the first objective is to increase the public good by strengthening the overall openness and functionality of the Bitcoin ecosystem through sidechains technology. Delivering returns to investors is an objective as well but its a secondary objective.'

Blockstreams founders include Austin Hill and Adam Back. I first met Austin in the late 1990s, when he was CEO of Zero-Knowledge Systems, a pioneer Internet privacy company. Adam is the developer of HashCash, which Bitcoin creator Satoshi Nakamoto relied upon for generating and verifying currency in the Bitcoin system. Together, they have decades of experience in the domains of cryptography, trust, and identity, all of which they are drawing upon in this new endeavor.'

Blockstream plans to extend the capabilities of Bitcoin through sidechains technology. Right now, when developers want to add some major new feature or characteristic to Bitcoin, like stronger anonymity, there are two approaches: Develop the software and hope Bitcoins core development team adopts it, or create an entirely new alt.coin. The alt.coin approach expedites innovation. But it also fails to capitalize on and potentially subverts the network effects that arise as developers, entrepreneurs, merchants, customers, and peer-to-peer nodes (aka the servers that house a cryptocurrencys blockchain) aggregate on a common platform like Bitcoin.'

Sidechains allow developers to add features and functionality to the Bitcoin universe without actually modifying the Bitcoin Core code, through a process called two-way pegging. Consequently, innovation can occur faster, in more flexible and distributed ways, without losing the synergies of a common platform with a single currency.'

Implementing sidechains will require changes to Bitcoin Core, however. It wont happen unless the Bitcoin core development team, and more broadly, the larger Bitcoin community, believes that the changes improve Bitcoins overall utility and status as an open, decentralized public good.'

And thats why Im participating in this first-round financing as an individual investor, and why Blockstream itself will function similarly to the Mozilla Corporation. Here, our first interest is maintaining and enhancing Bitcoins strong open ecosystem. And the structure weve chosen will give us the freedom and flexibility to prioritize public good over returns to investors.'

Over time, I believe this ecosystem-first approach will ultimately create massive economic value for everyone in the Bitcoin universe, including individual users, businesses of all types, developers, entrepreneurs, and investors. To fully capitalize on the architecture of trustless trust that Bitcoin enables, many new companies, products, and services are needed. A few months ago, for example, I led Greylocks investment in Xapo, a Bitcoin wallet.'

As Bitcoin evolves, Blockstream will play a huge role in helping it maintain its momentum, by making it easy to add new capabilities to the platform. And Blockstreams success will in turn generate new waves of technical and entrepreneurial innovation. It will help make Bitcoin the kind of open, highly adaptive platform upon which a vast array of complementary products and services can be built.'

'

ARTICLE: TOURS OF DUTY: HOW TO ORGANIZE MODERN EMPLOYMENT'

In an alliance at work, the tour of duty represents an ethical commitment by employer and employee to a specific mission thats expected to last a finite amount of time. An ideal mission is mutually beneficial: the company gains new products, customers, profits, etc. and the employee gains new skills, experiences, connections, and so on.'

The finite term of the tour of duty initial tours at adaptive companies tend to be 2-5 years long -- provides crisp focus and a mutually agreeable time frame for discussing the future of the relationship. It gives a valued employee concrete and compelling reasons to stick it out and finish a tour. Most importantly, a realistic tour of duty lets both sides be honest about their goals and time horizons, which is a necessity for trust.'

The tour of duty approach relieves pressure on managers and employees alike because it builds trust incrementally. Rather than an expectation of complete loyalty or job security on day one, everyone commits in smaller steps and, as with any kind of meaningful relationship, the relationship deepens as each side proves themselves to each other. Indeed, great employees might complete multiple tours at the same company, and as Ill discuss in a future post, some employees might be on very long term foundational tours.'

Put simply, the tour of duty is a way of choreographing the progressive commitments that form the alliance between company and employee.'

We see this approach as a way to incorporate some of the advantages from both lifetime employment and free agency. Like lifetime employment, the tour of duty offers predictability for both sides, which enables long term investment and loyalty. Like free agency, it preserves the flexibility that both employers and employees need to adapt to a rapidly changing world.'

By recasting careers at your company as a series of successive tours of duty, you can better attract and retain entrepreneurial employees. When recruiting top talent, offering a clear tour of duty with specific benefits and success outcomes beats vague promises like youll get valuable experience. Defining an attractive tour of duty lets you point to concrete ways that it will enhance the employees market valuewhile hes at the company and if and when he works elsewhereby picking up real skills, building new relationships, and so on.'

When I first founded LinkedIn, for example, I offered an explicit deal to talented employees. If they signed up for a tour of duty of between two to four years and made an important contribution to some part of the business, the company and I would help advance their careers, preferably in the form of another tour of duty at LinkedIn. This approach worked: the company got an engaged employee who worked to achieve tangible results for LinkedIn and who could be an advocate and resource for the company if he chose to leave after one or more tours of duty. The employee transformed his career by enhancing his portfolio of skills and experiences.'

Take David Hahn, for example. How did he go from a twenty-three-year-old with no business experience to one of the most sought-after executives in Silicon Valley? The answer is the unique way he structured his nine years of working at LinkedIn. Over four distinct tours of duty, Hahn transformed the company and his career.'

His first tour was as a junior business analyst; his last tour was running all of LinkedIns monetization products as a vice president. Each time, with a different manager, he scoped out a mission objective that led to long-term benefit for both sides. For the company, it shipped dozens of key products under Hahns stewardship. For the employee (Hahn), he acquired the managerial experience he needed to fulfill his longtime aspiration to become a successful company builder.'

As a manager at LinkedIn, Hahn was also explicit about tours of duty with his team members, encouraging them to rotate to new tours of duty within LinkedIn so that they could gain operational experience across multiple areas. Hahn did this despite that the fact that many of his team members were perfectly happy within his group. He saw it as his duty to help them grow. This seeming contradictionregularly changing roles in the context of a long-term relationshipis the essence of the tour of duty framework.'

A few of the managers we spoke with when writing The Alliance worried that the tour of duty framework, by talking openly about time horizons, might give employees permission to leave. But permission is not yours to give or to withhold, and believing you have that power is simply a self-deception that leads to a dishonest relationship with your employees. Employees dont need your permission to switch companies, and if you try to assert that right, theyll simply make their move behind your back.'

In fact, acknowledging that your employees might leave is how you build the relationship that convinces great people to stay. Thats the secret of the tour of duty conversation.'

This post is adapted from my new book The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age. See other posts from business leaders on LinkedIn about The Alliance:'

* Arianna Huffington: The Must-Read Book of the Summer That Could Change the Way We Work'

* Mike Bloomberg: Creating an Environment Where Innovation Flourishes'

ARTICLE: HOW AN INDEPENDENT PAYPAL CREATES GREAT PROSPECTS FOR PAYMENTS AND LONG-TERM VALUE'

'

Today, eBay Inc. CEO John Donahoe announced that he has hired a new leader for PayPal, Dan Schulman, and that the company will separate its PayPal and eBay payments and commerce businesses into standalone enterprises in the second of 2015 (Read the announcement here). This is a strong decision by John and eBays board: It opens a great deal of strategic optionality for eBay and PayPal as separate companies.'

My view here may come as a surprise to some.'

In February, when activist investor Carl Icahn was lobbying hard for a fast PayPal sale that would deliver a premium to eBay stockholders, I argued against a speculators mindset. For me, the question should rarely be about the fast premiums that can be had in the short term. Instead, its almost always about how you build products, services, and companies that endure over time and deliver compounding value to users, shareholders, and society at large.'

At the time, both John Donahoe and PayPals then-president, David Marcus, said that they had considered the option of separating PayPal and eBay. But ultimately they decided that it made more sense to keep the two companies together. Indeed, separating PayPal was not a new idea. And John made it clear that separation was a question he and the board regularly evaluated.'

While there are many factors that help a company create long-term value, a strong leadership team with a long-range vision for the company is one of the most important. And key strategic decisions decisions that will affect a companys fortunes for years and even decades to come have to be made by the leaders who are crafting and executing that companys long-term plan, not outsiders seeking premiums on stock trades.'

In addition, when market conditions start changing, you cant just jump without figuring out where you plan to land. The close relationship between eBay and PayPal has delivered proven benefits over time. A separation will create new optionalities, as I suggested above, but those new optionalities shouldnt come at the expense of the time-tested benefits of alliance. To preserve those benefits, a detailed vision and plan for the two companies would be needed before seriously pursuing a new direction.'

And now, eBay and PayPal have done that work. They have a plan to pursue this separation in a deliberate way, and I think there are three reasons that it makes sense.'

The payments platform competitive space is evolving quickly. For more and more consumers, their phones, rather than their PCs, are the point of sale. Apple Pay is scheduled to launch any day now. Google continues to expand Google Wallet. In the wake of Alibabas hugely successful IPO earlier this month, it is well situated for fast global expansion. Then, you have hard-driving private companies like Square, Stripe, and others. And these are just a few current forces signaling significant change in payments in the years to come. As an independent company, PayPal will have the strategic focus, agility, and flexibility that is needed to capitalize on opportunities and pursue partnerships, investments, and acquisitions in a rapidly evolving environment. Such strategic optionality may be key to long-term value.'

In June, David Marcus left PayPal to take a job at Facebook. John Donahoe had to find a capable executive to replace him, and he had to do it in a fast-moving and increasingly competitive environment. Establishing PayPal as an independent company is a smart way to attract serious attention from proven industry leaders like Dan Schulman and other crucial talent.'

The eBay marketplace captures value from having a deeply integrated payments system; the PayPal payments platform benefits from a critical mass of identity, reputation, balances, and transactional volume. Moving forward, both companies want to preserve these synergies. And to do so, they need a well-defined plan will allow them do so. Theyve got that now while simultaneously giving PayPal a chance to pursue a much broader future. This future should include a more expansive footprint in the entire payments ecosystem, and may also involve expanding into banking, peer-to-peer lending, and other strategic growth areas.'

In February, I wrote that innovation comes from long-term thinking and iterative execution. Here, were seeing that in action, as eBay and PayPal iterate new visions of the future. But even as visions shift in response to changing competitive landscapes, the values underlying the vision should remain the same. A commitment to creating long-term value is every true entrepreneurs lodestar. Sometimes that means maintaining proven alliances. Sometimes, it means striking out in new directions. In this instance, for the reasons Ive outlined above, I think that PayPal as a standalone enterprise can deliver potential massive long-term value.'

'

ARTICLE: YOU NEED EMPLOYEES WITH THE FOUNDERS MINDSET'

'

Photo source: Disney/ABC on Flickr'

Silicon Valley is the best place in the world for adaptation and innovation, as demonstrated by its economic growth over the past decade. If you want your organization to be able to survive and thrive in an environment where change is rapid and disruptive innovation rampant, you need to develop the adaptability that is the hallmark of this ecosystem.'

Obviously, not every industry works like Silicon Valley, nor should many established companies attempt wholesale adoption of start-up strategies. The question is which lessons from Silicon Valley are generally applicable. Mainstream medias coverage of Silicon Valley tends to focus on flashy details. But attributing the valleys success to four-star meals in cafeterias, Foosball tables, or even stock options is like attributing a Ferraris power to its bright red paint job.'

As eBay CEO John Donahoe has written on LinkedIn, the real secret of Silicon Valley is that its really all about the people. Sure, there are plenty of stories in the press about the industrys young geniuses, but surprisingly few about its management practices. What the mainstream press misses is that Silicon Valleys success comes from the way its companies build alliances with their employees. Here, talent really is the most valuable resource, and employees are treated accordingly. The most successful Silicon Valley businesses succeed because they use the alliance to recruit, manage, and retain an incredibly talented team of entrepreneurial employees. We write about this in my new book The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age.'

John likes to say that entrepreneurial employees possess the founder mind-set. As he put it to us, People with the founder mind-set drive change, motivate people, and just get stuff done. My previous book, The Start-up of You, showed individual professionals how to develop the founder mind-set for any type of career, including a career spent working at one or two companies. Indeed, having a founder mind-set doesnt necessarily mean you are going to start your own company. Many people with such instincts are quite happy to work at companies like eBay or LinkedInprovided such companies maintain an employment alliance that encourages entrepreneurial behavior. Having employees focused on the start-up of their career is a good thing; after all, employees who dont feel a pressing need to invest aggressively in their own careers probably wont be capable of the quick, decisive actions that your company needs to adapt and grow.'

The founder mind-set, and the alliance required to incorporate it into your company, werent always quite so critical. In the old economythe stable oneefficiency was the cardinal virtue. Employers placed employees on fixed tracks so that they could develop ever-higher degrees of specialization. But when markets change, specialization often shifts from asset to liability, as in the case of the proverbial buggy-whip manufacturer. In the new economy of fierce competition and rapid technological change, the markets are constantly shifting.'

Today, entrepreneurial thinking and doing are the most important capabilities companies need from their employees. As the competitive pace increases, it becomes more and more critical. Consider the effect of one entrepreneurial employee at a giant of innovation such as Pixar.'

John Lasseter is the type of entrepreneurial employee every innovative company wants. If youve seen movies like Toy Story, Finding Nemo, and Monsters, Inc., you know his work intimately. His movies have grossed over $3.5 billion in the United States alone, and have averaged over $250 million at the box office, making Pixar the most successful movie studio of all time. What most people dont know is the story of how Disney, his original employer, fired him.'

Lasseter began his career at Disney as a young animation designer in the days when animation was created with pen and paper, then converted into film. One day, a colleague showed him a video from a local conference about the emerging technology of computer-generated animation. Lasseter was struck by a visionDisney should create an entire film using computer-generated animation. He went to managers and pitched the idea. They listened carefully to his pitch, then sent him back to his desk. A few minutes later, he received a phone call from the head of Disneys animation departmentinforming him that he was being fired. The rationale for his dismissal: he was too distracted with his crazy ideas.'

Disneys management hired an entrepreneurial talent like Lasseter, but they treated him as a commodity rather than an ally, and in the process, they lost their chance to develop a multibillion-dollar business. Lasseter would have been happy to develop that business within Disney, but his managers wouldnt let him.'

Like many with the founder mind-set, Lasseter refused to give up on his dream. He joined George Lucass Lucasfilm, where he pursued computer animation as a member of Ed Catmulls computer division. A few years later, Lucas sold the then-unprofitable division to Steve Jobs, who named the resulting company Pixar. And in 1995, Pixar partnered with Disney to release the worlds first computer-animated feature film, Toy Story.'

In 2006, eleven years after Toy Story was released and twenty-three years after Lasseter was fired, Disney realized it had made a mistake the first time around by rejecting computer animation and ended up bringing Lasseter back. But it would cost themthe Walt Disney Company spent over $7 billion to buy Pixar. And thats how Lasseter ended up back at Disney as its chief creative officer of Disney Animation Studios.'

Imagine if you could recruit, manage, and retain a star talent like John Lasseter.'

To do so successfully, youll need to develop an Alliance with your employees. And that starts by building trust through honesty, which Ill talk about in a future post.'

'

Join the conversation about The Alliance on the LinkedIn Group. Below is a visual summary of the book.'

'

'

ARTICLE: UK APPATHON 2014: AN ENTREPRENEURIAL "CLIMBING WALL" FOR TOMORROW'S TECH LEADERS'

As I suggested in my first book, The Start-up of You, all humans are entrepreneurs. Our natural inclination to create, adapt and collaborate all hallmarks of entrepreneurship are in large part what define us as a species. But as much as entrepreneurship is innate, its also a mindset and set of practices that can be learned. And ultimately, fluency in these entrepreneurial skills is as important to a persons wellbeing as literacy and numeracy.'

To this end, Im pleased to announce a twist to this years UK Appathon, which just launched and runs through the end of October.'

The UK Appathon is an initiative of Silicon Valley Comes to the UK (SVC2UK), an annual not-for-profit program that I co-founded in 2006 with Sherry Coutu, an entrepreneur and investor who has also served as a longtime Advisory Board member at LinkedIn. The UK Appathon is a nationwide contest that challenges teams of university students to prototype an app over the course of a weekend. Weve been running it annually since 2011.'

But as I noted above, theres a twist this year. In the past, weve asked the university students to both generate ideas for apps and then do the coding. This year, were inviting primary and secondary students across the U.K. to complete the idea-generation portion of the contest.'

For the next few weeks, teams of students all across the U.K. will be brainstorming ideas for apps that theyd find useful in their own lives. Then, theyll create and upload a 60 to 90-second video pitch to YouTube. Media partners including the BBC, the Guardian, and Computer Weekly intend to cover the contest, and the public will vote on the pitches they believe have the most promise. The winning pitches will then be assigned to teams from participating universities, who will code prototype apps. '

Eventually, well choose winners in various categories like Digital Democracy, Social Networking, and more and the two teams behind each winning app (i.e., the primary/secondary school students who envisioned the app, and the university students who coded it) will be invited to attend an awards ceremony at the House of Commons as a part of this years SVC2UK, which is taking place in Cambridge and London on November 19 21.'

While I believe that entrepreneurial skills should be taught in schools, I also think its a discipline thats far easier to learn than it is to teach. Thats why I love that this years Appathon is bringing younger students into the fold. Appathons are a hands-on, experiential way for students to get a taste of entrepreneurship and discover what it takes to successfully navigate the chaotic and exhilarating startup environment. But whereas full-fledged entrepreneurism typically involves massive commitments of time and a not-insignificant amount of capital, appathons offer a lower-stakes introduction. In essence, theyre like the climbing wall at your local gym a safe and controlled environment in which to develop the skills that will allow you to tackle Half Dome some day (or Ben Nevis, for our climbing friends in the UK).'

Adding primary and secondary school students to the challenge also boosts the collaborative element of the UK Appathon. Collaboration is a key facet of entrepreneurship. To launch successful products and services in a world that has grown as competitive and fast-moving as ours has, you need networks of talent, networks of advisors, networks of financiers. While we tend to celebrate the heroic founder, entrepreneurship is, at heart, a team sport, and the strongest, most dominant teams have role players, coaches, and bench depth in addition to superstar quarterbacks.'

Thats why I also hope that the collaborative component of this years UK Appathon wont end with just the primary and secondary school teams who generate the app ideas, and the university teams who will do the coding. If youre a parent in the U.K., I strongly urge you to encourage your childs school to participate in the event. If work in the U.K. tech industry, perhaps you can help mentor one of the teams.'

As Sherry points out, there are nearly 1 million open jobs in the UK today, many of which require high-tech skills. Furthermore, the rapidly growing European app economy is projected to create upwards of 4 million new jobs by 2018. But only a tiny fraction of university students in the U.K. are now pursuing study and development of skills (computer science is one example) that will be required for the jobs of today, and more critically, the jobs of tomorrow. To change this dynamic, we need to integrate entrepreneurial and high-tech curricula and learning experiences at earlier inflection points in our education system so that we start building awareness in our children at a young age of the potential careers that lay ahead of them. If we want to ensure we have a generation of entrepreneurs and technologists who are fully capable of navigating the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities that the year 2030 will bring, we need to start preparing them today.'

ARTICLE: MANAGERS: IT'S TIME TO REBUILD TRUST WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES"

The world of work has changed, and the rules for managers need to change with it.'

We used to work in an era of stability and lifetime employment. Employers and employees committed to each other, for better or worse, through bull and bear markets, until retirement did them part. Because both sides expected the relationship to be permanent, both sides were willing to invest in each other.'

The traditional model of lifetime employment, so well-suited to periods of relative stability, is too rigid for todays networked age. Few companies can provide the traditional career ladder for their employees anymore.'

Manyprobably mostcompanies have tried to become more flexible by reducing the employer-employee relationship to whats explicitly spelled out in a legal and binding contract. This legalistic approach treats both employees and jobs as short-term commodities. Need to cut costs? Lay off employees. Need new competencies? Dont train your peoplehire different ones. Employees are our most valuable resource, companies insist. But when Wall Street wants spending cuts, their most valuable resource suddenly morphs into their most fungible resource.'

Its just business has become the ruling philosophy. Loyalty is scarce, long-term ties are scarcer, but theres plenty of disillusionment to go around.'

We cant keep going the way weve been going. Trust in the business world is near an all-time low. A business without loyalty is a business without long-term thinking. A business without long-term thinking is a business thats unable to invest in the future. And a business that isnt investing in tomorrows opportunities and technologieswell, thats a company already in the process of dying.'

Since we cant go back to the age of lifetime employment, and the status quo is untenable, its time to rebuild the employer-employee relationship.'

The business world needs a new employment framework that facilitates mutual trust, mutual investment, and mutual benefit. An ideal framework encourages employees to develop their personal networks and act entrepreneurially without becoming mercenary job-hoppers. It allows companies to be dynamic and demanding but discourages them from treating employees like disposable assets.'

That's why this month I launched a new book, co-authored with Ben Casnocha and Chris Yeh, titled: The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age."

The Alliance lays out a path forward for companies and their employees. Our goal is to provide a framework for moving from a transactional to a relational approach. Think of employment as an alliance: a mutually beneficial deal, with explicit terms, between independent players. This employment alliance provides the framework managers and employees need for the trust and investment to build powerful businesses and careers.'

In an alliance, employer and employee develop a relationship based on how they can add value to each other. Employers need to tell their employees, Help make our company more valuable, and well make you more valuable in the broader career marketplace.'

Employees need to tell their bosses, Help me grow and flourish, and Ill help the company grow and flourish. Employees invest in the companys success; the company invests in the employees market value.'

By building a mutually beneficial alliance rather than simply exchanging money for time, employer and employee can invest in the relationship and take the risks necessary to pursue bigger payoffs. For example, many HR leaders and executives get frustrated when they spend a lot of money on training and development programs, only to see employees walk out the door months later. If you think of your employees as free agents, the natural response is to slash training budgets. Why train a competitors new hire? In an alliance, the manager can speak openly and honestly about the investment the company is willing to make in the employee and what it expects in return. The employee can speak openly and honestly about the type of growth he seeks (skills, experiences, and the like) and what he will invest in the company in return by way of effort and commitment. Both sides set clear expectations.'

When a company and its managers and employees adopt this kind of approach, all parties can focus on maximizing medium-and long-term benefits, creating a larger pie for all and more innovation, resilience, and adaptability for the company.'

We are allies. Three simple words. Yet when spoken by a manager to an employee, these may be three of the most powerful words possible.At many companies, managers pretend that employees have a job for life. Employees pretend that they intend to work for their company for the rest of their careers. But deep down, both parties dont believe their own words.You cant build a trusting relationship on a foundation of dishonesty and self-deception. Yet the honest approach of considering every job temporary, and every employee a free agent leads to a bleak, cynical world without trust or loyalty.The answer is for managers and employees to treat each other as allies: Independent and autonomous players who voluntarily come together to work towards mutually agreed upon goals.This open, accepting approach allows managers and employees to be honest with each other, providing a solid foundation for mutual trust, mutual investment, and mutual benefit. It creates a bigger pie for everyone rather than treating our work relationships as a zero-sum game.In the weeks ahead, I'll describe more detail about how you craft an alliance with your employees. For now, remember that your journey as a manager will begin the next time you meet one-on-one with an employee and speak the three simple words that show that youre committed to an open, honest approach: "We are allies.

Join the conversation about The Alliance on the LinkedIn Group. Below is a visual summary of the book.'

'

ARTICLE: THE ALLIANCE: A VISUAL SUMMARY'

I'm co-author of a new book titled The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age. We'll be writing a lot more about the book here on LinkedIn in the weeks ahead. To kick us off, here's a visual summary of the key ideas that drive an employer-employee alliance, and details about the Tour of Duty framework."

'

ARTICLE: MANAGERS: IT'S TIME TO REBUILD TRUST WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES"

The world of work has changed, and the rules for managers need to change with it.'

We used to work in an era of stability and lifetime employment. Employers and employees committed to each other, for better or worse, through bull and bear markets, until retirement did them part. Because both sides expected the relationship to be permanent, both sides were willing to invest in each other.'

The traditional model of lifetime employment, so well-suited to periods of relative stability, is too rigid for todays networked age. Few companies can provide the traditional career ladder for their employees anymore.'

Manyprobably mostcompanies have tried to become more flexible by reducing the employer-employee relationship to whats explicitly spelled out in a legal and binding contract. This legalistic approach treats both employees and jobs as short-term commodities. Need to cut costs? Lay off employees. Need new competencies? Dont train your peoplehire different ones. Employees are our most valuable resource, companies insist. But when Wall Street wants spending cuts, their most valuable resource suddenly morphs into their most fungible resource.'

Its just business has become the ruling philosophy. Loyalty is scarce, long-term ties are scarcer, but theres plenty of disillusionment to go around.'

We cant keep going the way weve been going. Trust in the business world is near an all-time low. A business without loyalty is a business without long-term thinking. A business without long-term thinking is a business thats unable to invest in the future. And a business that isnt investing in tomorrows opportunities and technologieswell, thats a company already in the process of dying.'

Since we cant go back to the age of lifetime employment, and the status quo is untenable, its time to rebuild the employer-employee relationship.'

The business world needs a new employment framework that facilitates mutual trust, mutual investment, and mutual benefit. An ideal framework encourages employees to develop their personal networks and act entrepreneurially without becoming mercenary job-hoppers. It allows companies to be dynamic and demanding but discourages them from treating employees like disposable assets.'

That's why this month I launched a new book, co-authored with Ben Casnocha and Chris Yeh, titled: The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age."

The Alliance lays out a path forward for companies and their employees. Our goal is to provide a framework for moving from a transactional to a relational approach. Think of employment as an alliance: a mutually beneficial deal, with explicit terms, between independent players. This employment alliance provides the framework managers and employees need for the trust and investment to build powerful businesses and careers.'

In an alliance, employer and employee develop a relationship based on how they can add value to each other. Employers need to tell their employees, Help make our company more valuable, and well make you more valuable in the broader career marketplace.'

Employees need to tell their bosses, Help me grow and flourish, and Ill help the company grow and flourish. Employees invest in the companys success; the company invests in the employees market value.'

By building a mutually beneficial alliance rather than simply exchanging money for time, employer and employee can invest in the relationship and take the risks necessary to pursue bigger payoffs. For example, many HR leaders and executives get frustrated when they spend a lot of money on training and development programs, only to see employees walk out the door months later. If you think of your employees as free agents, the natural response is to slash training budgets. Why train a competitors new hire? In an alliance, the manager can speak openly and honestly about the investment the company is willing to make in the employee and what it expects in return. The employee can speak openly and honestly about the type of growth he seeks (skills, experiences, and the like) and what he will invest in the company in return by way of effort and commitment. Both sides set clear expectations.'

When a company and its managers and employees adopt this kind of approach, all parties can focus on maximizing medium-and long-term benefits, creating a larger pie for all and more innovation, resilience, and adaptability for the company.'

We are allies. Three simple words. Yet when spoken by a manager to an employee, these may be three of the most powerful words possible.At many companies, managers pretend that employees have a job for life. Employees pretend that they intend to work for their company for the rest of their careers. But deep down, both parties dont believe their own words.You cant build a trusting relationship on a foundation of dishonesty and self-deception. Yet the honest approach of considering every job temporary, and every employee a free agent leads to a bleak, cynical world without trust or loyalty.The answer is for managers and employees to treat each other as allies: Independent and autonomous players who voluntarily come together to work towards mutually agreed upon goals.This open, accepting approach allows managers and employees to be honest with each other, providing a solid foundation for mutual trust, mutual investment, and mutual benefit. It creates a bigger pie for everyone rather than treating our work relationships as a zero-sum game.In the weeks ahead, I'll describe more detail about how you craft an alliance with your employees. For now, remember that your journey as a manager will begin the next time you meet one-on-one with an employee and speak the three simple words that show that youre committed to an open, honest approach: "We are allies.

Join the conversation about The Alliance on the LinkedIn Group. Below is a visual summary of the book.'

'

ARTICLE: THE INFORMATION AGE TO THE NETWORKED AGE: ARE YOU NETWORK LITERATE?'

Its said that when architects walk through an office, they see ceiling ornamentation, light sources, building acoustics. When psychologists walk through an office, they see unresolved father issues and avoidant personality disorders. When I walk through an office, I see networks. I know that makes me sound like the kid from The Sixth Sense. But I dont see dead people. I see networks.'

When you truly see networks, it changes the way you plan and strategize. You move differently.'

Take job hunting. The Networked Age has radically changed this activity, and yet when you ask people how they look for a job, a surprising number continue to say they search the job listings. Thats the Information Age approach! In the Networked Age, you should look for people with connections to companies youre interested in, trace the best path from those connections to people who can share useful intelligence, and then ask for introductions to those people.'

Or consider investing. In my work at Greylock Partners, I dont form an investment theory and then go search for a startup that fits this theory. Nor do I purchase ad space in the Yellow Pages and hope that talented entrepreneurs let their fingers do the walking until they find me. Again, those are Information Age approaches.'

The Networked Age approach? I focus on being a great ally to my network, and developing strong relationships where the information flow is highly reciprocal. I put myself at as many key intersections in my networks as I can. As a result, my network inevitably ends up connecting me with great entrepreneurs and great investments.'

A decade ago, John Battelle stressed the importance of search literacy. What he meant was that people who were skilled at using Google to find information had an edge over those who had yet to acquire this aptitude. In the Information Age, if you couldnt make sense of an increasingly information-rich world through effective search capabilities, youd be culturally marginalized, just like a person who couldnt read street signs.'

Now, those who can conceptualize and understand networks both online and off have an edge in todays fast-paced and hyper-competitive landscape, where the speed with which we can make informed decisions is critical. To wit, the subtitle of my forthcoming book is "Managing Talent in the Networked Age" -- I think the networked age changes everything.'

I like to use the word literacy in this context because it suggests a fundamental skill, a capability you must possess in order to effectively navigate the world. An illiterate person, a person who cant read street signs or complete job applications, has limited opportunities compared to others who possess these skills. A literate person moves freely and capably through the world.'

So how do you know when youre network-literate? I think in terms of three levels that signify ascending competency:'

Apprentice: Using network technology'

Journeyman: Establishing a network identity'

Master: Utilizing network intelligence'

'

Apprentice: Using network technology'

At this most basic level of network literacy, youre part of some networks. You have a Facebook profile, a LinkedIn profile, etc. Youre using these networks to keep in touch with people you know, and on occasion, you may even use them to facilitate new connections.'

While you may not be completely fluent yet, you understand that Facebook is more than just a place to announce what you had for lunch its a place to strengthen personal relationships. Similarly, you know that LinkedIn is more than just a repository for your digital resume. You use phrases and keywords with deliberate intention, to maximize your discoverability by the kinds of people you want to be found by.'

In the case of my own LinkedIn profile, for example, my headline isnt Executive Chairman of LinkedIn. Its Entrepreneur. Product Strategist. Investor. Thats because my LinkedIn profile is targeted primarily to entrepreneurs who might want financing from me.'

(Youd be surprised at how many people simply use their current job title as the headline of their LinkedIn profile. This isnt wrong per se. But ultimately the headline on your LinkedIn headline is the first thing many people will see about you in a professional context so its an excellent place to choicefully craft your network identity. And your network identity is larger or at least it should be larger -- than your current position and company affiliation.)'

Another way to make yourself more findable by the kinds of people you want to be found by are to join the same LinkedIn groups that theyre participating in, or to follow relevant companies and individuals within the domain of your industry. Once you start thinking in terms of how the people you want to be found by might in fact find you and tailoring your profile to maximize such potential discoveries you have begun to think in a network-literate way.'

'

Journeyman: Establishing a network identity'

Once upon a time, we exercised unchecked authority over our identities, verbally air-brushing our resumes into highly idealized portraits of ourselves, carefully vetting the references we chose to vouch for us. In the Networked Age, however, were all visibly and enduringly enmeshed in networks even the so-called self-made man is a highly annotated specimen, with readily apparent links to the colleagues, mentors, institutions, and other entities that have helped shape the contours of his identity.'

Indeed, were all the sum of an ongoing conversation that we initiate and propel, but which colleagues, customers, and even competitors contribute to as well. And while we once relied upon the broad strokes of resumes to define us, now were often judged by far more granular, network-derived metrics of influence and authority: Who retweets our tweets? Who comments on our Medium posts? Who shows up on LinkedIn as a 1 degree connection?'

In the Networked Age, your professional identity expands well beyond your job title and the company you work for. Youre not just you anymore. Youre also who you know, how they know you, what they know about you, who they know, and so on. At the Journeyman level, this way of thinking is becoming second nature to you. You understand that your identity is multivariate, distributed, and partially out of your control your network helps shape your identity too.'

Increasing your network literacy also means understanding other peoples network identities. Tell me the name of a person, and Ill think of the network around them. I always see a person as part of a larger web of relationships. When I met Jeff Weiner, LinkedIns current CEO, Id already had conversations with many of my own trusted colleagues about him. I had relationships with people that he had relationships with, and these strong points of network connectivity gave me a clear signal about Jeff and the kinds of people he trusted and valued most. I had a network portrait of him. And based on that portrait, I knew I wanted to build a strong relationship with him.'

'

Master: Utilizing network intelligence'

Spend five minutes watching your LinkedIn feed or Twitter timeline, and its clear that information proliferates even faster in the Networked Age than it did in the Information Age. Consequently, the ability to extract the right information at the right time is more crucial than ever. Search literacy is an important starting point, but in todays high-velocity world, network literacy is increasingly crucial too.'

In the Information Age, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, CNN, and eventually Google were typically peoples first reads, i.e., their default sources of new information and intelligence. Now, if youre fully network-literate, your networks are your first reads because youve consciously built up pipelines of people who reliably deliver information that is highly significant and relevant to you.'

There is a whole dark net of critical-edge information that hasnt made it into newspapers and blogs, information that exists only in peoples heads. In the past, such information was difficult to access for all but the best-connected and most persistent individuals. Now, its often just a few keystrokes away.'

And if youre fully network literate, youve taken the time to understand the information flows within any given network. You know who the news breakers are. You know the thought leaders, the critics, and skeptics within a particular domain. Youre familiar with their preferred sources and biases.'

While platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter certainly qualify as information Costcos, one-stop shopping for data en masse, the quality of your connections and the strength of the relationships you have with them -- generally matters more than the quantity. Ten extremely informed individuals who are happy to share what they know with you when you engage them can tell you a lot more than a thousand people you only know in the most superficial way.'

But remember, using networks well is always a two-way street. People who exhibit the highest levels of network literacy know that the more relevant, high-quality information you share with others, the more such information youre likely to receive. To be truly network literate is to always be thinking of how you can add value to the networks youre a part of, and to make it a priority to turn connections into relationships, and relationships into alliances.'

What Do You See When You Enter a Room?'

These days, its not just Internet entrepreneurs who should see networks everywhere they look. When architects walk into a room, they should see networks. When psychologists walk into a room, they should see networks. In the Networked Age, were all like the little kid from The Sixth Sense. If youre not seeing networks when you enter a room, you might want to check your pulse.'

Learn how to support the development of network literacy inside your own company in my forthcoming book (with Ben Casnocha and Chris Yeh) titled The Alliance: Managing Talent in the Networked Age.'

Photo: Rawpixel & HunThomas / shutterstock'

Remix: LinkedIn'

ARTICLE: THE WORLDS BANK: HOW CROWDFUNDING IS DISRUPTING OLD BANKING'

In San Francisco, Teresa Goines is breaking down deeply entrenched cycles of poverty and crime, one bowl of peanut butter stew at a time. Old Skool Cafe, the 1940s supper club she started, gives jobs to at-risk and former gang youth. When banks turned her down, 41 people shed never met crowdfunded a $5000 loan, putting their faith and money in Teresa, a former corrections officer with no restaurant experience in a city where most new restaurants fail. Their bet paid off. She repaid her loan in full. Each year, 25 troubled young people, most who have tangled with the law, get their lives back on track. Today, Teresa has an even bigger dream of opening Old Skool Cafes across the nation and revitalizing communities everywhere.'

As high-tech investors, both of us obviously value high-impact, fast-growth companies that attract massive global user bases. Such companies can scale quickly, create thousands of jobs, and help the U.S. improve its export economy at a time when its share of global economic output is falling. But we also recognize that most businesses are small businesses. Indeed, out of the roughly 27 million businesses in the U.S., 21 million of them have no employees theyre sole proprietorships. And approximately 4.6 million of the 5.9 million businesses that do have employees have nine or fewer.'

Thus, small businesses are a crucial component of the American economy. Yet when people like Teresa Goines try to create new businesses and jobs, banks shy away. According to Biz2Credit, an online devoted to small business funding, big banks currently reject more than 8 out of 10 loan applicants, and small banks reject 5 out of 10. Some estimates suggest that investment in small businesses has dropped as much as 44 percent since the Great Recession in 2008. That's tens of billions of dollars that fueled the economy and helped our communities thrive gone, completely eviscerated. Meanwhile, twenty-one million people are underemployed or unemployed. Globally, its far worse, with half the planets population living on less than $2 a day."

While talent is universal, opportunity is not even in the land of opportunity. The greatest threat to our long-term prosperity goes far beyond the financial crisis and the health of a few banks on Wall Street that have been deemed too big to fail. The real threat we face is a global opportunity crisis. In both the developing and the developed world, billions of people dont have access to jobs and capital.'

Thats why were on the board at Kiva, the pioneering crowdfunding platform where citizen lenders invest small sums in micro-entrepreneurs all over the world. Nearly 1.3 million borrowers like Teresa Goines, living in 76 countries, including the U.S., have received more than half a billion dollars in loans. 99% of these loans have been repaid in full, flying in the face of traditional banking assumptions about credit and trust.'

Kiva is no longer unique. Today, an exploding crowdfunding sector is making billions of dollars of capital accessible to upstarts and entrepreneurs. Over 700 crowdfunding marketplaces, led by the likes of IndieGogo, Kickstarter, and Lending Club, are democratizing access to capital, fueling entrepreneurship and innovation, and profoundly changing the face of philanthropy at unprecedented scale and impact.'

One of the best ways to fuel widespread prosperity is by helping Main Street invest in itself. Crowdfunding relies on the wisdom of crowds to identify fund and unleash entrepreneurial innovation far more efficiently than the credit rules of banks can.'

Call it the emergence of a world's bank a system built by and for the people, delivering credit in America and across the globe in a radically decentralized, highly scalable, and crucially equitable way."

The World Bank funds institutions. The world's bank funds people. For decades, the World Bank has existed as a top-down mechanism to spur economic growth in developing nations. In contrast, the worlds bank picks up with a nimble, bottoms-up model that is far more attuned to on-the-ground needs of micro-entrepreneurs and their communities worldwide."

The motivations for citizen-lenders run the gamut from altruistic to creative to financial. Kickstarter and IndieGogo funders typically get some type of reward in return for their capital. Kiva lenders are paid back by micro-entrepreneurs, albeit with no interest. Services like Lending Club offer lenders a way to earn interest on personal loans.'

In the same way that citizen journalists have shaken up Old Media, citizen lenders may upend Old Banking. Already, Lending Club has made $4 billion in personal loans in the U.S. alone. Kickstarter lenders have applied over $1 billion to more than 60,000 projects in just five years. More than 60 projects obtained at least $1 million in funding, and one attracted over $10 million. There are over 1 million Kiva lenders residing in 198 countries. Finally, a new change in federal regulations has opened the market for equity crowdfunding, further empowering innovative entrepreneurs via marketplaces like AngelList and CrowdFunder.'

Still, its easy to underestimate the impact of crowdfunding, dismissing these purpose-driven marketplaces as a simplistic way for do-gooders to easily support pet causes, yet incapable of driving massive structural change that can improve prosperity for all, not just a select few. The opposite is true.'

Crowdfunding can easily go where traditional banks cannot. Take Erastus Kimani, a 73 year old schoolteacher turned entrepreneur, who lives in a remote part of Kenya without indoor plumbing, much less indoor banking. Erastus attracted lenders from all over the world. They crowdfunded $1700 which allowed him to triple the production of his ceramic stove liner business. Using just his mobile phone, Erastus applied for, received, and paid back his loans in full. He did it all without bank officers, ATMs, or even a computer.'

More broadly, crowdfunding is a sophisticated and pragmatic expression of democratic values and ideals. It recognizes that person-to-person connections are the essential fuel that powers the Internet. Just as Old Media behemoths struggle to keep up with the growth of people-powered content, traditional financial institutions cant scale like crowdfunding platforms can. Imagine what it would cost a traditional bank to hire enough loan officers to match the network intelligence that millions of citizen lenders provide.'

As technology continues to virtualize money, brick n mortar banks have become as superfluous as traditional bookstores. Ornate buildings designed to convey trust and dependability just make loans look more costly. Meanwhile, the worlds bank lending infrastructure is increasingly made up of people like Erastus Kimani and his mobile phone. His status as a dependable borrower qualified him to join a growing network of trustees and vouch for other micro-entrepreneur borrowers in his village of Maragua, Kenya.'

Remember George Bailey from Its a Wonderful Life, the small-town banker who helped local entrepreneurs achieve self-sufficiency and resilience? Or the stories of Bank of America founder A.P. Giannini, who in the wake of San Francisco's devastating 1906 earthquake and fire famously made loans to distraught home and business owners on the basis of a handshake?"

Crowdfunding multiplies George Bailey and A.P. Giannini. It uses early 21st century technology to return us to early 20th century ideals of loyalty, reciprocity, and community. The result is highly efficient trust networks based on reputation. It replaces credit score-based lending by faceless institutions with a person to person character-based lending model. It creates connections and stories that intermediary institutions are hard-pressed to facilitate. 34 individuals put their faith in Erastus Kimani. Not surprisingly, he paid back both of his loans in full.'

Wall Street is evermore focused on creating increasingly exotic, abstract, and toxic instruments of speculation with little to no societal benefit. Our financial institutions are becoming less and less tied to producing tangible goods and services. In contrast, crowdfunding re-humanizes our economy. It makes the act of lending more fulfilling for both lenders and borrowers, brings meaning to commerce, and creates tangible social and economic value at a mass scale.'

While many traditional attempts to address poverty often set up recipients for a vicious cycle of dependency, crowdfunding platforms tie opportunity to innovation, accountability, and self-reliance. They create an ecosystem where debt, applied to entrepreneurial ends rather than mere consumption, can create value for people rather than simply becoming a millstone around their necks.'

In the case of Kiva, lenders invest again when their loans are repaid. Over time, $25 has the impact of $250. $100,000 has the impact of $1 million. $1 million has the impact of $10 million. Its philanthropy exponentialized.'

Google and a growing number of companies and results-driven philanthropists have begun creating multi-million-dollar evergreen loan funds that are tapping the power of this leverage. Imagine if the Small Business Association, the Fortune 500, the World Bank, and even Wall Street followed suit and began directly supporting those three billion overlooked micro-entrepreneurs like Erastus Kimani and Teresa Goines through the worlds bank movement. It would profoundly accelerate our quest to end the global opportunity crisis.'

Every technology revolution has its early adopters and its laggards. The early adopters fueling the worlds bank and democratizing access to capital understand that the true path to prosperity lies in recognizing the critical role that micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses play in establishing healthy and resilient economies. They understand that crowdfunding starts with individuals but quickly scales. First, it changes a borrower's life. Then, a family's. Then, a community's. Finally, it changes the fate of nations."

Julie Hanna is an entrepreneur, investor, and chairperson of Kiva.org. Here's a link to this article on her Linkedin profile. Reid Hoffman is an entrepreneur and board member at Kiva.org."

(Photo credits: Crowdfunding logo via Rocio Lara. Erastus photo via Kiva) '

ARTICLE: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMING "RESOURCE REVOLUTION

Over the next decade and a half, 2.5 billion people in China, India, and other developing countries will join the global middle class. They are going to need skyscrapers to live in and super-stores to shop in. They are going to want smartphones, cars, flank steaks, air conditioning, pet clothing, Disneyland vacations, and probably some throw pillows. '

How is a planet already straining under the pressure of todays 2 billion middle-class consumers going to accommodate 2.5 billion additional ones? '

For many observers, this unprecedented economic growth foretells a Malthusian meltdown. In this scenario, skyrocketing demand for scarce natural resources will lead to unchecked carbon emissions, water wars, massive deforestation, $100 Big Macs for the rich and cricket-meat Bug Macs for everyone else. '

McKinsey director Matt Rogers and Stanford professor Stefan Heck have a more optimistic take on the future. In their compelling new book, Resource Revolution, they show how a third Industrial Revolution, focused on radically optimizing land usage and natural resources, is starting to materialize.'

In their vision, the combination of finite resources and exploding demand for raw materials and finished goods isnt a recipe for disaster. Instead, they see it as the biggest business opportunity in a century. Dealing with resource scarcity will compel companies to adopt new technologies, new manufacturing processes, and new management practices -- all of which will drive innovation faster and faster. '

As the global middle class expands, there will massive opportunities for entrepreneurs to create more efficient industries and more productive business ecosystems. Technologies and industries will collide in new and unexpected ways, and these entrepreneurial mash-ups, inspired in part by scarcity, will potentially produce greater utility and prosperity for society at large.'

Take, for example, the car industry. Its production processes have been refined over a century of increasing consumer adoption and global competition. Its elaborate ecosystem of dealerships, service stations, roads, highways, parking lots, and fast-food joints with drive-thru windows is so robust and pervasive that driving in America feels as natural as breathing. '

And yet for all its culture-shaping success, the entrenched car industry is wildly inefficient and not just in terms of the 14 miles per gallon a Chevy Camaro gets. Even the most fuel-efficient cars arent driving machines as much as theyre parking machines. The average car is on the road only 4 percent of the time. And in that hour or so each day its in motion, it does a horrible job of leveraging the energy it requires to operate. '

According to physicist and environmentalist Amory Lovins, almost all the energy in a cars gas tank is either lost to heat dissipation, tire wear, idling, and powering accessory systems like air conditioning, or used to move the massive weight of the car itself less that 1 percent of that energy is actually used to move the vehicles operator. On a similar note, roads reach peak throughput only about 5 percent of the time.'

In recent years, however, resource scarcity and the new approaches it inspires has brought innovation to the car industry from entities with expertise in electric batteries, consumer electronics, and information technologies rather than combustion engines. '

Tesla and Toyota are building cars that use high-torque, low-waste electric motors. Zipcar, Uber, and similar services make car- and ride-sharing as convenient and reliable as car-owning thus turning more and more cars into driving machines rather than parking machines. Driverless technologies, pioneered by Google and now pursued by virtually every major car manufacturer and various other institutions (such as universities), will be ready for public adoption as early as 2017. The driving efficiencies that such technologies enable will eventually give every 4-lane highway the throughput of a 32-lane highway. '

Tomorrows cars wont just use natural resources more efficiently than todays do. Theyll also make automobility cheaper, accessible to a wider range of users, more convenient, and faster. Thanks to driverless technologies and the car-sharing services theyll enable, blind people and old people will be able to transport themselves without assistance. Circling for parking will go the way of dial-up modems. And millions of suburban garages, no longer needed to store two or three lightly used late-model sedans, will be leasable through Airbnb and other sharing platforms as office space for millions of new start-ups!'

Ultimately, using raw materials, water, and energy more efficiently and thus boosting resource productivity means using them more intelligently. And thats where networks and platforms come into play. Over the last decade, through platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, weve gotten very good at sharing information about people and organizations, and creating real-time and increasingly granular maps or graphs of relationships, networks, information flows, etc. '

Where we need even more innovation is in the realm of the so-called Internet of Things i.e., objects and products that are connected to the web and potentially to each other. Because it is through greater and greater degrees of network intelligence that we can achieve the efficiencies that can boost resource productivity. For example, Tesla knows more about how its customers use its products than most car manufacturers, because Tesla cars send information back to the company about when, where, and how theyre being used (if owners consent to this functionality). In turn, such knowledge can help the company determine what improvements it can make to optimize future usage.'

At Greylock, my colleague Josh Elman led an investment in a company called SmartThings that is developing a physical graph of the world through a platform that makes it easy to connect various household products to the web. Increasingly, well be able to leverage the collective intelligence that a million connected refrigerators or thermostats can generate to seriously reduce energy loads (in addition to making everything more convenient and fun to use). In this environment, the opportunities for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinking are endless.'

Which is not to say that boosting resource productivity to meet the demands of the worlds rapidly expanding middle class will be easy. As Matt and Stefan suggest in their book, it will take long-range thinking and the right inputs from governments as well. Nor will every company out there embrace this challenge. But companies that proactively look for ways to deploy resources more intelligently can certainly help mitigate the strains that will come as the worlds middle class more than doubles in size over the next fifteen years. '

Indeed, if we really want to stave off peak oil, peak water, and other instances of potential resource depletion, then we need to keep pushing closer and closer toward peak network. '

ARTICLE: SHORT-TERM PROFIT TAKING VS. LONG-TERM VALUE CREATION: THE FUTURE OF PAYPAL'

In January, activist investor Carl Icahn acquired around 2 percent of eBays stock. A month or so later, eager for a return on his investment, he published an open letter to eBays shareholders.'

In it, he expresses concerns about the "long-term value" of the eBay subsidiary PayPal, and its ability to remain competitive over the long term. His solution: Spin off the fast-growing payments processor as a standalone enterprise.'

While Icahn mentions long-term shareholder value no less than seven times in his letter, his perspective on PayPal seemed far more focused on the short term when he spoke with Forbes a couple weeks ago.'

"If you just went out and took it public youd get a huge premium because of growth" Icahn told writer Steven Bertoni. "PayPal is a jewel, and eBay is covering up its value.

According to Bertoni, Icahn would like to see eBay sell PayPal to a company with "a more natural fit," such as Visa. "Another giant in the space would pay a huge premium for PayPal," Icahn enthused.'

But if we assume that Icahn really does care about creating long-term stockholder value, as he insists, then the true issue here isnt what sort of short-term pop he can engineer for eBays stock price, or what size premium PayPal might fetch from another company.'

The true issue is what conditions are most conducive to PayPal growing increasingly valuable over, say, a 10-year time frame. Ive been interested in this question ever since I served on PayPals founding board of directors.'

So, what conditions will best help PayPal continue to grow its user base, increase revenues, and bolster its profit margins on a consistent and ongoing basis? Those are the long-term trends that are going to create real value for committed eBay shareholders.'

To me, whats most interesting about this story is the light it sheds on the clash of values between Icahns Wall Street world and the culture of Silicon Valley.'

In the popular imagination, Silicon Valley is mythologized as a place where entrepreneurs who are barely old enough to vote conjure a few thousand lines of code into billion-dollar companies in a matter of months.'

But instances where this actually happens are rarer than total solar eclipses. The reality of Silicon Valley is that innovation takes time. The fabled Eureka moments may lead to product breakthroughs. But they rarely lead to fully formed products, and they never lead to mature and fully formed businesses.'

Innovation comes from long-term thinking and iterative execution.'

The prototypical Silicon Valley venture capital approach to investing is structured around the pace that start-ups evolve. VCs think in terms of five-to-ten year development cycles, not quarterly earnings reports, as they break out funding opportunities into Series A rounds, Series B rounds, Series C rounds, etc. Liquidity is typically seven to ten years down the line.'

Strong platforms take years to realize their full potential. They often provide opportunities to cash out early along the way -- but for those who are patient and more interested in long-term value creation, their rewards are even sweeter. Just ask Facebooks Mark Zuckerberg. Or Workday founders Aneel Bhusri and Dave Duffield.'

While PayPal is no longer a startup, it still has massive growth prospects. But to someone who isnt investing in the long term, its just a cash cow thats ready to be slaughtered.'

Thats why Carl Icahn is churning out letters to shareholders so fast he actually rechristened ex-PayPal COO and Yammer founder David Sacks as David Yammer in his first missive. Its hard to imagine he could have a coherent long-term plan given that his due diligence doesnt extend to surnames. (It's since been corrected.)"

Icahn is determined to manufacture consent for a spin-off, then a sale, so he can make a quick profit on that PayPal premium.'

If you believe that it takes more than a few caustic letters to shareholders and a quick trade to deliver compounding returns to investors over time, Icahns argument loses much of its zing.'

After all, long-term value usually results from long-term strategies crafted and executed by a strong leadership team. eBay CEO John Donahoe has lifted the companys annual revenues from $8.54 billion in 2008, when he took over, to $16.05 billion in 2013. David Marcus, PayPals president, is an accomplished entrepreneur who is deftly bringing PayPal into new markets.'

Both of them have extensive knowledge of the commerce and payments landscape, and both of them agree that keeping PayPal and eBay together is the best way to create long-term value for both companies. Theyve considered spinning off PayPal, and they have determined that the current setup is the most strategic one.'

I dont have any inside information about their vision, but I do have some thoughts about why the PayPal/eBay combination works as is.'

The payments space is extremely competitive right now. Amazon, Google, Apple, and Square all want to own it. And none of them are playing with each other. Instead, theyre all deploying whatever strategic assets they have to create their own closed commerce-and-payments systems.'

In other words, while Carl Icahn is insisting that eBay and PayPal are two disparate businesses with two very different business platforms that should separate in order to improve their effectiveness, everyone else in the space is converging as furiously as they can.'

Amazon is a commerce platform with its own payments system. Google has a commerce platform and a payments system. Apple has the capacity to leverage its commerce platforms (iTunes, App Store) and its hardware into a closed-loop commerce system that would let users pay for online and offline purchases using their iPhones. Square has allied with Starbucks because it needs large commerce partners to feed it transactions to process.'

Any one of these payments system players would likely jump at the chance to add to one of the worlds largest decentralized commerce platforms to their strategic assets.'

They cant, however, because PayPal did that 12 years ago, when it sold itself to eBay.'

At the time, I was working as PayPals Executive Vice President and helped engineer that deal. We had taken PayPal public earlier that year and had plenty of capital, but we felt that joining eBay would be advantageous for long-term innovation. There were massive synergies between eBays peer-to-peer marketplace and PayPals easy-to-use payments mechanism. Working as a team, we could share data and analytics about customer acquisition and fraud activity, we could grow our user base faster and less expensively, and we could create higher profit margins in a marketplace where a huge number of higher value transactions would be taking place on a consistent basis.'

Twelve years later, the synergies that led to our deal with eBay are no less relevant. Today, 30 percent of PayPals $180 billion in annual transactions take place on eBay. 30 percent of its new users come from eBay. Its profit margins are higher here than they are in less established parts of its business.'

Thanks to its mature and lucrative eBay business, PayPal has the ability to keep its margins as low as possible in the areas where it is undertaking its greatest expansion efforts namely mobile payments and retail payments. And as evidence from the last couple of years suggest, this relationship is allowing PayPal to innovate in dynamic and abundant fashion. Last year, it launched 58 new global product experiences. Its mobile business has grown from $14 billion in 2012 to $27 billion in 2013. It has signed up approximately two million physical retail locations that accept PayPal as a form of payment.'

As competition in the payments sector intensifies, profit margins on all payments systems will likely start trending to zero. As that happens, controlling major commerce platforms will become even more important to payments players, because theyll still be able to create value by building valuable ecosystems on top of them.'

As Carl Icahn correctly asserts, companies do need to be responsive to their shareholders. Sometimes, activist investors can help spur constructive action against CEOs and boards who have been mis-managing a companys long-term innovation efforts. That isnt the case with PayPal.'

Instead of providing a compelling explanation for why PayPal would be better off diverging from eBay at precisely the moment when everyone else in the payments industry is looking for convergence opportunities, Icahn has invested energy into attacking the integrity of eBay board members Marc Andreessen and Scott Cook, and the leadership abilities of eBay CEO John Donahoe. In a series of letters, he has insisted Marc Andreessen bulldozed the rest of the board of directors and unilaterally orchestrated a transfer of Skype to Microsoft that benefited Andreessens own firm to the detriment of eBay. Icahn should know better; these types of decisions are made by the entire board of directors.'

While this has made for lively if unconvincing theater -- in Icahns imagination, Andreessen has almost Lex Luthor-like powers to control the minds of others -- it doesnt qualify as a long-term strategy.'

Instead, its classic market exploitation. And while market exploitation can lead to a quick buck in a quick trade, it creates less value over time than more fundamental approaches that rely on strong leaders executing carefully considered plans to build lasting assets.'

In the end, Icahns stock in trade is trading stocks. Silicon Valleys stock in trade is creating powerful products and platforms. The former approach creates short-term returns. The latter approach creates economically productive ecosystems that spawn industries, jobs, products, and services that benefit society at large, and compounding profits for long-term shareholders.'

ARTICLE: HELPING DREAMERS AFFORD HIGHER EDUCATION THE DREAM.US'

In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled that, by way of the 14th Amendments Equal Protection Clause, non-citizen children of undocumented immigrants are legally entitled to a free K-12 public school education, just like U.S. citizen children and the children of legally admitted immigrants. '

It is a just and practical decision. It is morally consistent with the national identity America has always claimed for itself. The United States is a land of openness and opportunity, a nation of immigrants that doesnt just tolerate newcomers, but embraces them.'

As a result of that 1982 Supreme Court decision, an estimated 65,000 undocumented young people graduate from U.S. high schools every year. These young people have become known colloquially as Dreamers, evoking the American Dream. And yet, according to the American Association of State Colleges and University, only 5 to 10 percent of them continue on to college.'

Why? There are no federal laws prohibiting undocumented immigrants from attending public colleges. The federal government leaves this decision to individual states, and many allow it. (Private institutions, in turn, are free to admit whomever they want.)'

What federal law does prohibit, however, is extending federal aid of any kind to these students. If youre a Dreamer, you cant get a Pell Grant, a Perkins Loan, or any other kind of federal grant, loan, scholarship, or work-study payment. Every year, the U.S. Department of Education distributes more than $150 billion in financial assistance to help students pay for their education. But Dreamers have no access to this resource.'

Dreamers can sometimes obtain financial assistance at the state level, or through private sources. As the numbers show, however, they are mostly being priced out of higher education.'

To address this, my friend Don Graham, former publisher of the Washington Post, is creating TheDream.US, a private scholarship fund for Dreamers.'

With support from the Gates Foundation and private contributions from Don and his two co-founders, Henry Munoz and Carlos Gutierrez, TheDream.US has already raised $25 million. They are partnering with a number of colleges around the country that offer affordable, high-quality education (around $25,000 total for a four-year bachelors degree) and they plan to give qualifying students full-tuition scholarships to these schools.'

Dreamers are Americans in every way other than documentation. As Americans, we all believe in freedom of opportunity and meritocracy. By the time a Dreamer graduates from high school, we, as a country, have already made a substantial investment in his or her education. In part, we do so for pragmatic purposes to help individuals who are likely to spend a great deal of their lives in the U.S. become more productive and autonomous members of society.'

The alternative to providing opportunity is terrible. In his 1982 Supreme Court opinion, Justice William Brennan noted that withholding education from undocumented children would only help to create and perpetuate a subclass of illiterates that would surely [add] to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime'

Were already providing a K-12 education to undocumented schoolchildren. We should go more than halfway. Extending that opportunity to higher education and making college genuinely accessible to Dreamers is the only way we can fulfill the promise of American Dream.'

Thats why I am so thrilled to see what Don and his co-founders are doing with TheDream.Us. I hope you will take a moment today to visit the site, and join us in spreading the word about this opportunity for the next class of great American Dreamers.'

Photo: http://thedream.us/'

ARTICLE: THE LINKEDIN VOLUNTEER MARKETPLACE: CONNECTING PROFESSIONALS TO NONPROFIT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES'

Last spring, a shelter in Berkeley, CA needed an architect to help it expand its facilities. A young architect who lives nearby had just made a New Years resolution to join a nonprofit board.'

In an earlier era, they would not have known each other existed.'

But in this instance the shelters executive director used LinkedIn to contact the architect and the architect jumped at the opportunity to serve on the shelters board. The connection brought enormous value to both parties involved the nonprofit shelter got the expertise it needed and the young architect was able to amplify her social impact while broadening her professional skills.'

This story inspired me and my colleagues at LinkedIn. As someone who studies and invests (as a venture capitalist) in internet marketplaces, I realized the somewhat serendipitous connection between architect and shelter would happen more often if there were a dedicated volunteer marketplace. After all, there are hundreds of thousands of nonprofit needs in the world, and even more professionals who want to donate their skills to help meet these needs.'

The challenge is that nonprofits and professionals dont know how to easily find each other. LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace aims to solve that problem.'

When I talk with LinkedIn members, many tell me they arent actively looking for traditional job opportunities. Instead, they want to hone or leverage their skills while also making a positive impact on the world.'

Students often fall into this category. Retired professionals and stay-at-home parents seek ways to continue to leverage their skills and experience. And while busy professionals who love their current gigs may not necessarily be looking for a new position, these are often the very people who are most actively engaged in meaningful searches a volunteer opportunity that will enhance their life in ways beyond what their primary vocation provides.'

By providing opportunities for all these different kinds of LinkedIn members, we aim to help the social sector by doing what we do best as a company: connecting talent with opportunity at massive scale.'

And to ensure that the volunteer opportunities you see in the LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace are high quality, were partnering with the most trusted organizations in this space, including Catchafire, Taproot Foundation, BoardSource and VolunteerMatch.'

Talent is as critical to the nonprofit sector as it is to the for-profit sector. Estimates suggest that approximately two million board seats need to be filled each year and according to a Taproot Foundation study, 92% of nonprofits would like to use skilled volunteers to help them achieve their mission.'

To date, more than three million LinkedIn members have added the Volunteer and Causes section to their profile.'

Over the last six months alone, more than 600,000 have signaled they would like to serve on a board or do skill-based volunteering.'

Today, with the launch of LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace, non-profits can discover the relevant members whove expressed interest in volunteering. In addition, these members will now be able to browse hundreds and eventually thousands of specific, high-quality volunteer opportunities that nonprofits are seeking to fill.'

Volunteering is a great way to hone your existing skills, develop new professional skills, and network with like-minded colleagues. In a recent survey on LinkedIn, 42% of hiring managers stated they consider volunteer work equivalent to full-time work experience. 20% said theyd hired someone because of their volunteer experience.'

LinkedIns vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. Jeff and I have discussed this vision in terms of the development of the worlds first economic graph, i.e. a complete digital representation of the global economy, including all full-time, part-time, and volunteer opportunities.'

By incorporating volunteer opportunities into the Economic Graph, the right talent will be more likely to find the right non-profit opportunities, which we think is key to solving some of the worlds great challenges.'

We know that many professionals have already added volunteering to their New Years resolution list. With the launch of LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace, wed like to help you keep that promise to yourself. Heres to a personally and professionally rewarding 2014!'

ARTICLE: WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE PITCHING LINKEDIN TO VCS'

At Greylock, my partners and I are driven by one guiding mission: always help entrepreneurs. It doesnt matter whether an entrepreneur is in our portfolio, whether were considering an investment, or whether were casually meeting for the first time.'

Entrepreneurs often ask me for help with their financing decks. Because we value integrity and confidentiality at Greylock, we never share an entrepreneurs pitch deck with others. What Ive honorably been able to do, however, is share the deck I used to pitch LinkedIn to Greylock for a Series B investment back in 2004.'

This past May was the 10th anniversary of LinkedIn, and while reflecting on my entrepreneurial journey, I realized that no one gets to see the presentation decks for successful companies. This gave me an idea: I could help many more entrepreneurs by making the deck available not just to the Greylock network of entrepreneurs, but to everyone.'

And so today Ive published LinkedIns Series B deck on my personal website. There are three thematic emphases:'

To help you figure out what aspects of the pitching process youd like to understand better, Ive summarized seven prevalent myths below, which I address more deeply in the full presentation.'

1.MYTH: The startup financing process is about one thing money.TRUTH: A successful financing process results in a partnership that delivers benefits beyond just money.'

A successful financing process obviously results in you raising capital for your company. But there are other critical outcomes you should shoot for as well. For example, great investors can significantly boost the strength of your network, which helps in recruiting employees and acquiring customers. Great investors can also be a source of network intelligence, so you can better prepare for likely challenges and opportunities ahead.'

Put another way, the ideal financing partner is a financing cofounder. This is why already-wealthy entrepreneurs raise money from experienced investors for their next startup: they know partnering with angels and venture capitalists is about more than just the money.'

Sadly, many investors actually add negative value, so an investor who adds no value (dumb money) but who doesnt interfere with the operational process can sometimes be a decent outcome. But ideally you find an investor who can proactively add value (smart money).'

How do you know if an investor will add value? Pay attention to whether they are being constructive during the pitch and financing process. Do they understand your market? Are their questions the same questions that keep you up at night? Are you learning from their feedback? Are they passionate about the problem youre trying to solve?'

2.MYTH: If your team is strong, show the team slide early in your pitch.TRUTH: Open your pitch with the investment thesis.'

You have the most attention from investors in the first 60 seconds of your pitch, so how you begin is incredibly important. Most entrepreneurs start with a slide on the team. The team behind your idea is critical, but dont open with that. Instead, open with what the investors have to believe in order to want to want to be shareholders in your company -- the investment thesis.'

Your first slide should articulate the investment thesis in generally 3 to 8 bullet points. Then, spend the rest of the pitch backing up those claims and increasing investors confidence in your investment thesis -- which includes background on the team. Clearly articulate your investment thesis so investors can offer feedback that helps you refine it, eventually getting to a place where you both agree on it.'

This advice applies to seed funding rounds, too. Yes, seed investors understand that early stage companies have many unknowns and the idea will change a lot, so they look carefully at the people to see whether the team will be able to adapt. But even at this stage, lead with your overall investment thesis. Persuade investors your investment thesis is intriguing, then show who can make it happen.'

3.MYTH: All investment pitches have the same structure.TRUTH: Decide whether your pitch is a data pitch or a concept pitch.'

Your investment thesis is either concept-driven or data-driven. Which kind you are pitching?'

In a data pitch, you lead with the data because you are emphasizing how good the data already is. Investors therefore evaluate your company based on the data. When LinkedIn went public, it was a data pitch to public market investors. We showed investors a multi-year track record of data.'

If its a concept pitch, on the other hand, there may be data, but the data supports a yet undeveloped concept. A concept pitch shows your vision for how the future will be and how you will get to that future, so investors will want to buy a piece of it. Thus, concept pitches depend more on promised future data rather than present data.'

4.MYTH: Avoid bringing up anything that might paint your business as risky and decrease investors confidence.TRUTH: Identify and steer into your risk factors.'

Experienced investors know there are always risks. If they ask you about your risk factors and you cant answer, you lose credibility because they assume you are either dishonest or dumb. Dishonest because if youve thought about the risk factors, but choose not to share them, youre implying you're not committed to a partnership. Dumb because you arent smart enough to understand that all projects have risk factors including yours. Explicitly identify the one to three risks that could thwart your success and how you will mitigate them."

5.MYTH: Arguing that you have no prospective competitors is a strength.TRUTH: Acknowledge all types of competition and express your competitive advantage.'

Entrepreneurs often say they have no competition, assuming thats an impressive claim. But if you claim that you dont have competition, you either believe the market is completely inefficient or no one else thinks your space is valuable. Both are folly.'

The market is efficient, eventually -- if a valuable opportunity emerges, others will discover it. To build credibility with investors, you want to show that you understand the competitive risks and show why youre going to win.'

Express your competitive advantage this way: Why are you going to break out of the pack? What is your advantage? If you arent clear and decisive, investors wont believe you have an edge that can lead to success.'

6.MYTH: Dont compare yourself to other companies because you think youre unique.TRUTH: Pitch by analogy.'

Every great consumer internet company grows up to be a unique organization. But in the early days, you want to use analogies to successful outcomes to describe what your company is and what its potential could be. Time is short -- it helps to refer to what those investors already understand.'

The best pitch I heard of was in Hollywood for a film called Mans Best Friend. The pitch was Jaws with Paws. Investors were told that if the movie Jaws was a huge success, a similar plot but on land with a dog could also be a huge success. The movie turned out to be terrible, but the pitch was excellent.'

To be sure, pitch by analogy but dont necessarily reason by analogy. Reasoning by analogy, when youre developing your business strategy, is dangerous. In startup land, youre running across a minefield, so the details matter and you have to be careful with your analogies as you conceive strategy. But for high level pitches, analogies work great.'

7.MYTH: Focus on todays pitch. The future will take care of itself.TRUTH: Think also about the round after the one youre currently raising.'

Every time you raise a round, you should be thinking about the subsequent round of financing. Assuming you successfully close the current round, how will you raise money later? Who will be the next investors you pitch? What will their concerns be? What will you need to solve next? '

Expect that Series B investors will want to see some slides from your Series A deck. Series C investors will be similarly interested in your Series B deck. Etc. When I created our Series A deck, I presented a growth curve that would be good enough to get an investment, but I also had confidence that I could beat it. I wanted to be able to go into my Series B presentation and say, "Heres what I said before, and heres how I did." Because we beat our Series A expectations for network growth, investors could comfortably trust our promise to build revenue with our Series B financing.'

______________________Want to dive deeper and better understand how to pitch your startup? Read the full presentation at my personal website.'

(Photo: Digital Vision via Getty Images.)'

ARTICLE: DISRUPTING THE DIPLOMA'

Every year, millions of Americans embark on the quest to earn a four-year college degree. Many motives propel them. They go to acquire skills and knowledge from experts in their fields. They go, more generally, to learn how to learn, and to broaden their minds in ways that will help them function as autonomous adults participating fully in the civic life of their country. They go to find friends and mentors. They go because they know that in todays highly competitive job market, many employers wont even grant them an interview for a position as a receptionist or a file clerk unless they have a four-year-degree.'

College marketing literature rarely expresses this last fact so bluntly. Instead, it tends to emphasize vibrant communities of scholarship and learning, stimulating atmospheres of intellectual inquiry, enduring commitments to academic excellence.'

Now, however, there are an expanding number of ways to acquire specific skills and knowledge faster and less expensively than one can manage through a traditional four-year degree program. There are increasing opportunities and venues where people can seek mentorship and develop strategic alliances.'

The sole unique feature of a few thousand U.S. institutions of higher learning is their ability to grant four-year degrees. And because a diploma from a four-year program is the mechanism a majority of employers use to screen potential hires, its both increasingly valuable and increasingly costly to obtain.'

These days, getting that sheepskin from a top-flight university can cost approximately $200,000 in tuition alone. And while many schools have begun to steeply discount their advertised tuitions as they scramble to attract new students in the current market, thousands of graduates continue to emerge from college saddled with six-figure debts. In 2010, the nations collective student loan debt exceeded its collective credit card debt for the first time in history.'

To help temper the high cost of college, a number of high-tech start-ups have been making impressive strides in the realm of online instruction. But if we truly want to retool higher education for the 21 century in the most forward-thinking way possible, we shouldnt confine our retooling efforts to instruction alone.'

In the same way that trailblazers like Coursera and Udacity are making instruction faster, cheaper, and more effective, we should also make certification faster, cheaper, and more effective too. '

To do this, we need to apply new technologies to the primary tool of traditional certification, the diploma. We need to take what now exists as a dumb, static document and turn it into a richer, updateable, more connected record of a persons skills, expertise, and experience. And then we need to take that record and make it part of a fully networked certification platform.'

Once we make this leap, certification can play a more active role in helping the higher education system clearly convey to students what skills and competencies they should pursue if their primary objective is to optimize their economic futures.'

Granted, college isnt just for training young people for the world of work. But if we truly believe that a college education is the best path toward general prosperity and personal fulfillment, we need to do more to ensure that our college graduates are economically viable.'

One way to accomplish this is to establish certification as a platform in which the roles and interests of key players in the higher education system students, educators, and employers are explicitly articulated and tightly integrated. Functioning as a feedback loop, certification can then help achieve a goal that is at least as crucial as controlling tuition costs: Helping individuals stay employable and competitive in a professional landscape where the desired skills and competencies change rapidly.'

We sometimes call a diploma a sheepskin. Why? Because until around a hundred years ago, thats what most of them were made from. Then, paper diplomas began to appear. After centuries of usage, that was the big upgrade to this technology. And there really havent been any since.'

Typically, we dont think of diplomas as a technology. But they are. Economists often speak of their signalling value. Equipped with a diploma, a job-seeker broadcasts numerous positive attributes to potential employers: Perseverance, self-governance, competence in at least one area.'

Employers, in turn, use diplomas as screening mechanisms. If you don't have a diploma, you don't get an interview. According to the New York Times, even employers looking for receptionists and file clerks require a bachelors degree these days. When you get 800 resumes for every job ad, you need to weed them out somehow, an executive recruiter told the newspaper."

So a diploma is essentially a communications device that signals a persons readiness for certain jobs.'

But unfortunately its a dumb, static communication device with roots in the 12 century.'

That needs to change.'

At my alma mater, Stanford University, a bachelors degree currently costs more than $160,000 in tuition alone. Less than ten miles from Stanford, however, another school, Foothill College, also issues degrees. There, you can get a two-year associate's degree for around $2,790, or less than 2 percent of what youd pay for a Stanford degree."

The problem is if the baseline requirement to obtain a job interview, even for positions like receptionist and file clerk, is a four-year bachelors degree, then in practical terms an associates degree is not even worth 2 percent of a Stanford degree. Its worth zero.'

So despite the fact that colleges and other education providers have established a variety of alternative programs and degree options, at a variety of different price points, employers have simply placed more and more emphasis on traditional four-year degrees.'

Not that this means employers are satisfied with the system.'

In March 2013, the radio show Marketplace teamed up with The Chronicle of Higher Education and asked around 700 employers to grade the nations colleges and universities on how well they were employing their graduates for the workplace.'

53 percent of them said they had trouble finding recent graduates qualified to fill positions at their company or organization. 28 percent said colleges did only a fair job of producing successful employees. They also said that more than grades, major, or what school a person attended, employers viewed an internship as the single most important credential for recent grads.'

At first glance, this perspective is baffling. Employers insist that college degrees are a prerequisite for employment, even for low-skilled clerical positions. And yet what they find most telling is not how well people do in four-year-degree programs, but how well they do in settings that approximate workplaces.'

Thus, theres actually reason for hope here. The more employers realize that four-year degrees dont necessarily guarantee the attributes they value most, the more likely theyll be to demand a system that does.'

'

We spend years of our lives working to obtain a diploma. We invest substantial capital in it. And yet compared to the nuanced portraits of our aptitudes and attitudes that our teachers presented to our parents on our first-grade report cards, a college diploma is an opaque and unrevealing document.'

If we were building a higher education system from scratch, would our records of assessment and certification look anything like todays diplomas? Ask a hundred people to build a better diploma, and youll probably end up with a hundred different solutions. None, however, would look like a traditional sheepskin.'

In my opinion, these are the characteristics a 21 century diploma should have:'

Two hundred years ago, what you learned about Latin, the Bible, and mathematics when you were 21 was just as likely to be true when you turned 70. So you spent four straight years in college lecture halls and libraries, you acquired skills and knowledge that would serve you for life, and then you were done.'

Now, in todays fast-changing world, it makes more sense to learn provisionally, opportunistically, as new challenges and necessities arise.'

To make this style of learning more practical, we need certification for it that employers will grow to trust and value even more than they do traditional bachelors degrees because the efficacy will be so much better.'

Imagine an online document thats iterative like a LinkedIn profile (and might even be part of the LinkedIn profile), but is administered by some master service that verifies the authenticity of its components. While youd be the creator and primary keeper of this profile, you wouldnt actually be able to add certifications yourself. Instead, this master service would do so, verifying information with the certification issuers, at your request, after you successfully completed a given curriculum.'

Over time, this dynamic, networked diploma will contain an increasing number of icons or badges symbolizing specific certifications. It could also link to transcripts, test scores, and work examples from these curricula, and even evaluations from instructors, classmates, internship supervisors, and others who have interacted with you in your educational pursuits.'

Ultimately the various certificates you earn could be bundled into higher-value certifications. If you earn five certificates in the realm of computer science, you might receive an icon or badge that symbolizes this higher level of experience and expertise. In this way, you could eventually assemble portfolios that reflect a similar breadth of experiences that you get when you pursue a traditional four-year degree.'

For students, the more modularized approach to instruction embodied in such diplomas would have immediate benefits. Traditional four-year degrees maximize tuition costs, because they only award certification for lengthy courses of study that require substantial capital investments. A more modularized system would move beyond this all-or-nothing approach. Instead of taking general education classes for two years and then dropping out and ending up with little to show for their efforts except two years of debt, students could make smaller investments -- in money and time -- to acquire specific credentials.'

This approach would also encourage students to think more strategically about specific learning paths to pursue, and make it easier to integrate internships into their education. Instead of randomly choosing courses to fulfill general education and support courses requirements, a student on a more modularized path might focus on, say, the six courses necessary to earn a certificate in Workplace Communication Skills or The Future of Space Exploration. And then complete an associated internship before moving on to subsequent certificate programs.'

At LinkedIn, weve developed a broad Skills & Expertise taxonomy that our members use to describe their attributes, and which then serve as the basis for endorsements from colleagues. For example, some of my skills include Entrepreneurship, Project Management, and Viral Marketing. In a more outsourced form of Apple University, the in-house program that Apple now uses to teach its executives to think more like Steve Jobs, companies could use this taxonomy to publicize the skills and experiences they value most, and education providers could develop curricula that leads to certification in these areas.'

For champions of a traditional liberal arts education, encouraging our nations youth to major in Project Management for Yahoo! may sound like a higher education inferno even Dante himself couldnt stomach.'

But the national mandate to produce more college graduates -- as expressed by President Obama and many others -- doesnt arise from our imminent shortage of Comp Lit majors. It arises from our desire to give more people access to training that can put them on a path to economic security, and to help them develop the skills that can keep America competitive on a global level.'

Diplomas that get updated over time as new certificates are added, and which exist as part of larger certification platform, could transform the ways that employers use diplomas. Traditionally, bachelors degrees have offered an easy way to winnow a pile of a thousand resumes into a pile of twenty resumes -- but theyre also a very limited filter. Because the specific information they codify about a person is minimal, theyre more far more useful for weeding than finding.'

As certification gets more granular, however, and as diplomas contain more information and exist as part of a larger, networked ecosystem, new possibilities emerge. Want to find ten potential employees who have amassed at least three certificates related to brand management and have at least five positive endorsements from their instructors? A 21 century diploma should allow you to do that.'

One of the main reasons the college degree persists as a technology is because it doesnt need a user manual. We know what a traditional college degree signifies in general. Were familiar with many of its nuances. A degree in Biochemistry & Molecular Biophysics from CalTech means one thing. A degree in Sculpture from Bennington means something else.'

How, in a landscape of infinite certificates, will we determine which ones to value and trust? This is the problem that has always plagued alternate forms of certification, and it will only intensify as digital instruction becomes more full-featured and effective.'

One organization trying to bring a sense of order to the imminent chaos is Mozilla, the non-profit that oversees the development of the open-source web browser, Firefox, and where Im on the Board of Directors. In 2011, Mozilla introduced Open Badges, an initiative to develop free software and an open technical standard that any organization or individual can use to issue verified digital badges that symbolize a skill or achievement attained through either online or offline study or participation in some activity.'

For example, you might earn a badge for completing a six-week Introduction to Statistics course, or for consistently making high-value contributions to an online message board where math students seek help on their homework.'

As a person earns badges from multiple sources, theyre all stored in a private repository called the Mozilla Backpack. There, you can arrange your badges into themed groups and choose which ones to share on social networks and other sites. Each badge comes with a great deal of metadata attached to it, including information about the issuer, what the badge signifies, the criteria used to assess your achievements, and on some occasions, links to the work you did in pursuit of the badge.'

Already, Peer to Peer University, the YMCA of Greater New York, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Disney-Pixar, to name just a few, have issued or are developing badges using Mozillas technical standard. Mozilla is a good initial step, but there are many attributes that are important ranging from employer trust to persistent storage of the certification if the source goes away that still need to be worked out.'

Creating a shared standard for attaching machine-readable information to certifications is an important first step for getting employer buy-in. Another key step will involve aggregating this data. If millions of people start storing their certification information in a common repository like LinkedIn, certification will evolve from a product (i.e., a traditional diploma) into a platform that can be easily searched and analyzed.'

With certification as a platform, not just a product, the feedback loops between all parties will tighten. Education providers will have more capacity to track what employers are looking for and adjust their curricula accordingly. Students will have more explicit guideposts to follow, so they can invest their tuition dollars and time into developing skills that will truly increase their chances of transitioning successfully to the workforce. Employers will be able to use certification as a finding mechanism, not just a screening mechanism.'

With certification as platform, Weed out everyone who doesnt have an Ivy League diploma will evolve into Lets find someone who possesses these specific skills and attributes that will help our organization. With certification as a platform, the communication device currently known as the diploma becomes a much richer signal that will help businesses hire better and help individuals learn and grow faster.'

Making this transition wont happen overnight. But if we truly want to use technology to transform higher education, we cant just confine our efforts to transforming instruction. We have to transform certification too. In doing so, we have an opportunity to create a new system that makes it clear to students what skills are most relevant and in highest demand, and thus gives them a chance to pursue these skills more strategically.'

But our higher education system cant implement such changes alone. The business world has to embrace certification-as-a-platform, too. As long as it continues to depend on a 12 century communications device, the diploma, as its preferred gateway to entry, we wont be able to fully capitalize on 21 century innovations in technology and education.'

'

Author notes: Thanks to Greg Beato for significant editorial support on this piece. Also thanks to Ben Casnocha, Mimi Ito, and Joi Ito for their feedback. Photo credit: Anirudh Rao.'

ARTICLE: IMMIGRATION AND THE STATUE OF LIBERTY'

'

In the weeks ahead, there will be a critical national debate on the details of the immigration legislation pending in congress. But this week, let's all reflect on Emma Lazarus's famous poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty as a reminder of immigration's role in our national history. Please watch and share FWD.US's newest ad called "Emma".'

'

'

'

(Photo Credit: gary718 / Shutterstock.com)'

ARTICLE: CLASS OF 2013: HERE ARE THE 3 SECRETS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL GRADUATES'

'

'

'

[That's me, on the right, at Stanford graduation.]"

It's graduation season again and I know that there are a great many students graduating who don't feel ready for the new world of work. It's true that the world is changing "

dramatically, but as a new grad I want you to know that if you have anxiety about what to do next and where you fit in an uncertain and ever-changing world, you're not alone. I know the feeling -- it took me 15 years after I graduated to figure out what I was doing with my life and I still am figuring it out today. Shaping your career is a lifelong process.To help new grads navigate this new world of work, I've published a slideshow with career advice specifically for new grads based on the book I co-authored with Ben Casnocha, The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career.Embedded below. Enjoy!"

ARTICLE: SHAPE YOUR IDENTITY OR IT WILL SHAPE YOU'

Keep your identity small. Paul Graham'

Identity has become somewhat of a dirty word, especially in Silicon Valley circles. In many minds, the word identity goes hand in hand with the word politics; a divisive tool used by politicians to win voters by appealing to religious or ethnic affiliations.'

YCombinator founder Paul Graham even wrote an essay about the importance of keeping your identity small. Once your identity is threatened, he reasons, you become defensive and resistant to change or even dialogue. Thereby, non-collaborative and non-productive.'

I agree that challenging someones identity can trigger defensiveness, but the answer isnt to pretend that identity doesnt exist.'

Identity is a core and unavoidable part of all our lives. Our actions shape our identity, and in turn, our identity shapes our actions. Trying to pretend that identity doesnt matter may make you feel better about yourself, but it wont affect how others see you, and how their perceptions shape their actions.'

The great irony is that many of those who, like Paul, advocate the suppression of individual identity arent shy in advocating the construction of strong corporate identities and brands. Whether youre an individual or a company, identity matters.'

I believe that each of us should be thoughtful, proactive, and rigorous about our own identity. Focusing on and answering a few key questions will allow you to shape your identity and thus your life to better meet the expectations you have of yourself.'

As much as you might believe that your age, gender, or race is irrelevant, they affect how others perceive you. In fact, they even affect how you perceive yourself. In a famous set of experiments, subjects who were primed with different elements of their identity actually performed differently on tests. Asian-American women who were primed with their ethnicity did better on math tests than the control group, and even better than those who were primed with their gender. Doubtless these women considered the stereotype that men are better at math pernicious and false; that didnt stop it from affecting them.'

Silicon Valley is famous for its belief that it is a pure meritocracy, but Ive noticed that most of the loudest advocates for this belief are young white men, and most of its other advocates are older white men.'

We all have many aspects to our identities that even *we* dont even realize we have. Every action we take, no matter how seemingly trivial, can have meaning to others, which is why its critical to be thoughtful about shaping our identities.'

Your identity is your vector; it is a path defined by what you do and why you do it. By indicating your direction, it helps you define your available options. Like an old-fashioned newspaper reporter, your identity helps you sharpen your answers to the 6 Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and hoW.'

What: What you stand for in the world. You have to stand for distinct things, not platitudes. One of the biggest reasons Im an advocate for identity is because I believe in this What. We are all moral agents, and we need to be thoughtful about what we stand for. Why am I a good person? isnt just a rhetorical question.'

Who: Who you stand with. Whos in your network? Whose networks do you belong to? Part of the reason I wanted to respond to Pauls essay is the fact that Paul is someone that I stand with.

Ironically enough, Paul is incredibly clear about whom he stands with; Paul is all about helping technologists and engineers have an impact on the world.'

How: How you manifest your identity. What are the key things youre going to do? One of the reasons I chose to write this essay is that I believe writing is one of the best ways to help thoughtful people evolve their views. Writing makes it clear what I stand for in a very public and shareable way.'

Where: Where you stand is also an integral part of your identity. Geography matters. If your identity includes becoming a successful software entrepreneur, you ought to be in Silicon Valley. Strong entrepreneurs recognize that theyre much more likely to succeed in Silicon Valley than anywhere else.'

Why: Why do you take a stand? We are moral actors in this world, and we should be conscious about the reasons we take a stand. If you treat this as an unconscious, unshapeable thing, thats bad for the world. The Why of your identity is something that binds all of your choices together, and frequently comes down to a statement of principle. I believe in a number of key principles that I apply to myself and the world at large: A world of diminished violence, reaching human potential, getting to truth through intellectual discourse, and universal civil rights that apply to all people, all cultures, and all societies.'

When: When do you act on your stance? When are you willing to take on risk, suffering, or pain? Frequently, the answer is When its really important, which ties into the Why of your identity.'

Coming up with these answers can be hard, even uncomfortable, but it is essential. You cant just go with the flow on everything. Neither absolute flexibility nor inflexibility is a practical approach to life. Even someone as notoriously insistent on getting his way as Steve Jobs reflects this principle. Steve was inflexible on things like design and user experience, but he chose those things thoughtfully and with a purpose. When you know the answers to these questions, youre much better equipped to lead a life that reflects your beliefs and values.'

One exciting development for constructing a thoughtful identity is the rise of what I call Network Identity. There are key differences between a traditional group identity and the new network identity. A traditional group has a set of members, and is the same for each member. A network, on the other hand, is different for each individual. Unlike a community, networks can overlap while still being different.'

We like to say things like You are what you eat, to reflect the reality that your diet is one of the most critical inputs to your health. In the same way, network identity states, You are whom you choose to befriend. The sum of your network provides others with a valuable way of gauging your individual identity. When I meet someone new, like many, I look them up on LinkedIn. Looking at their position in the network, especially our set of mutual friends, is one of the strongest inputs into how I perceive them.'

Just as with your personal identity, you build your network identity through the choices you make. The good news is, for most of us, choosing whether or not you want to have a relationship with someone is easier than deciding what abstract principles to follow. The bad news is, most of us dont actively and explicitly terminate our friendships, so sometimes our roster of friends makes an unintended impression. Even here, however, you need to be thoughtful; my friend, right or wrong is just as misguided as my country, right or wrong.'

Paul Grahams approach of keeping your identity small may help keep conflicts from arising over your identity, but in fact this could actually be negative. Your identity helps you define key borders and boundaries (Where and When). You have to choose what youre going to advocate and defend (What and Why). If you dont enforce the integrity of your identity, youll lose it. In other words, if you talk the talk, you have to walk the walk.'

Saying youre a good person is meaningless unless you actually *act* on behalf of others. If you thought the invasion of Iraq was a mistake, what did you personally do about it? If you think the US shouldnt support autocratic regimes, what are you doing about it? Only Tweeting doesnt really count.'

This can be a fine line to walk; I think of it as the difference between being principled and self-righteous. You should follow the principles behind your identity; you shouldnt seek out conflict as an act of self-aggrandizement.'

Identity comes from choice; choice comes from identity. On a daily basis, the actions you take, the people you spend time with, and the principles you choose to defend will define your identity. Therefore, you should choose to construct an identity that signals to the world your core values and unique choices.'

P.S. It hardly seems fair for me to pontificate about personal identities without sharing how I view my own identity. Not all of you will agree with the principles I follow, but understanding them will certainly help us have a productive dialogue. Here are some of the ways that I characterize myself:'

(Thanks to Chris Yeh and Ben Casnocha for their help on this essay.)'

ARTICLE: LEANING IN AT LINKEDIN: WOMEN, WORK, AND THE WILL TO LEAD'

Each month, we invite luminaries from around the world to the LinkedIn campus to share their insights with LinkedIn employees.'

Last week, Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO and author of Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead, and Gina Bianchini, Founder & CEO of Mightybell and Co-Founder of Lean In, joined me for a fireside chat. I have known Sheryl and Gina for years and admire them both personally and professionally. The book is a gift and I recommend reading the whole thing.'

I was delighted to sit with them to discuss Sheryls new book and the foundation they created to promote change. Here are a few actionable points from our discussion:'

The Success and Likeability Penalty: One of the more enlightening chapters in Lean In focuses on the inverse correlation between success and likability for a professional woman. Sheryl demonstrates through good argument that the more successful a woman gets, the more she is likely to be penalized in the workplace when it comes to promotions, raises, and opportunities, whereas the more successful a man becomes, the more support he receives.'

Sheryl gives good tactical advice on being likeable while being successful: ask good questions, smile a lot, and more. Of course, ultimately, this advice should become obsolete: the culture should change such that a woman shouldnt have to compensate for or be self-conscious of her success.'

Work and Home Balance: On having it all: As a man in the business world, I am rarely asked how I balance my professional commitments with my personal life. Nor has the question of whether I can "have it all" ever been directed my way. Yet women who pursue both a rewarding career and an active personal life as a mother face these questions constantly. The implication is that women must choose one or the other, or else she will shortchange both.'

Work and home balance is a hard challenge, but the solution certainly begins with finding the right life partner. Sheryl devotes an entire chapter to the topic for good reason: her husband Dave (also a good friend of mine) is fundamental to her success, just as Sheryl is to Dave's. With a true partnership at home, they are each able to flourish as parents and as professionals."

The critics prove the point: There are a number of misconceptions regarding Lean In, mostly from people who havent read the book. For example, some say that Sheryls own success somehow makes her message irrelevant to a less successful and less wealthy general population. Its true that this is a book about the path to leadership its for women who aspire to serious professional achievement. But in a sense, this criticism validates Sheryls underlying point. After all, if Jack Welch had written a book on leadership, would we say it only applies to already-successful people because Welch himself is in an elite orbit? Hardly.'

Building our future, men and women alike: More talented women leaning in helps all of us. As Gina pointed out, if women majored in computer science at the same levels as men, wed solve the engineering talent gap in Silicon Valley. In this way, "leaning in" is at least as important an issue as immigration.'

Sheryl and Gina founded the Lean In organization to create a community where both men and women can find and offer inspiration, share their experiences and gain access to the types of tools that can help each of us lean in a bit more each day.'

#'

I strongly believe we are all better off with more women in leadership roles. Sheryl has started a conversation with Lean In about how to do this; now its up to each of us to make sure were acting on its advice.'

(Photo credit: Monika Burzynska-Evje)'

ARTICLE: HOW TO THINK ABOUT RISK WHEN INVESTING IN YOUR CAREER'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

Risk tends to get a bad rap. We associate it with things like losing money in the stock market, or riding a motorcycle without a helmet. But risk isnt the enemy--its a permanent part of life. In fact, being proactively intelligent about risk is a prerequisite for seizing breakout opportunities. Many more people would enjoy breakout opportunities if it were only a matter of tapping networks, courting serendipity, and being resourceful. The reality is that doing those things is usually necessary but rarely enough. Theres competition for good opportunities. And because of that, if you can intelligently take on risk, you will find opportunities others miss. Where others see a red light, youll see green.Risk in a career context is the downside consequences from a given action or decision, and the likelihood that the downside actually occurs. Risky situations, then, are those in which the risk level crosses a threshold. For example, flying on a commercial airplane of a major airline is not risky because while the downside scenario of a crash is painful, the likelihood of a crash is extremely low. Meanwhile, the reward of rapid transit is significant. Theres risk when you get on a plane, but its so low that commercial flights are not risky.Risk is the flip side of every opportunity and career move. [I]f you are not genuinely pained by the risk involved in your strategic choices, its not much of a strategy, says Reed Hastings of Netflix. This is as true for careers as it is for business. If you dont have to seriously think about the risk involved in a career opportunity, its probably not the breakout opportunity youre looking for.The constant presence of risk is why every career Plan A should be accompanied by a Plan B and Plan Z. Of course, risk isnt confined to career-related activities. Doing anything contains risk, including things we do every day, like going for a jog in the park or living in a world where there are nuclear weapons and earthquakes. Even inaction contains risk. A sick person who chooses not to see a doctor is taking on a risk by doing nothing. Inaction is especially risky in a changing world that demands adaptation (see the American auto industry, for example).So we are all risk takers. But we are not all equally intelligent about how we do it. Many people think you get career stability by minimizing all risk. But ironically, in a changing world, thats one of the riskiest things you can do. Others think acknowledging downside possibilities is a sign of weakness: Failure is not an option! may make for a good movie line, but its not good when formulating strategy. Rather than avoiding risk, if you take intelligent risks, it will give you a competitive edge. '

Learning how to accurately assess the level of risk in a situation isnt easy, for a few reasons. First, risk is both personal and situational. What may be risky to you may not be risky to someone else. There are people for whom quitting a job before having another one lined up is unacceptably risky; for others, its a fine proposition. There are people who forego earning income for several months to start their own companies; others wouldnt dream of putting themselves in a situation where they arent guaranteed a steady salary and benefits.Whats more, risk is dynamic. You are changing, the competition is changing, the world is changing. What may be risky to you right now may not be a month or year or five years from now. Whats the risk of ruffling your colleagues feathers if you lobby aggressively for a lead role on a project? It depends on murky factors that are always in flux. If you just got a raise and upgrade to your title, for example, its a different calculus than if youre new on the job. Nothing is universally risky or not risky; its a matter of degree and it various tremendously based on situation and personality.Assessing risk, while always difficult, is not impossible. Entrepreneurs do it every day. But they dont use fancy risk-analysis models like those found on Wall Street. And neither should you. Theres no mathematical formula that could possibly capture the probabilities and range of outcomes of a dynamic start-up, let alone the dynamic start-up that is your career. Its impossible to quantify the pros and cons of every opportunity. You will have time constraints. You will have information constraints. Moreover, your intuition is riddled with cognitive biases that get in the way of rational assessment. So here are a few principles to keep in mind to help you evaluate how risky an opportunity really is, and how you manage the risk that does exist.Overall, its probably not as risky as you think.Most people overrate risk. At our core we humans are wired to avoid risk. We evolved this way because to our ancestors, it was more costly to miss the sign of a predator (threat) than to miss the sign of food (opportunity). Neuropsychologist Rick Hanson puts it this way: To keep our ancestors alive, Mother Nature evolved a brain that routinely tricked them into making three mistakes: overestimating threats, underestimating opportunities, and underestimating resources (for dealing with threats and fulfilling opportunities). The result is that were programmed to overestimate the risk in any given situation.Sticks get our attention a lot faster than carrots do. Psychologists call this negativity bias, and it pops up all the time in day-to-day life. One stern warning to avoid working with a person makes a stronger impression than one glowing recommendation. Anxiety about how your boss will react to an unconventional proposal will overpower feelings of optimism that hell be impressed by your work.Overestimating threats and avoiding losses may be a fine strategy for achieving evolutions cold mandate to pass our genes on to future generations. But its not the way to make the most of this life. To lead a big and vigorous life, you must work to overcome this negativity bias. The first step is to remind yourself that the downside of a given situation is probably not as bad, or as likely, as it seems.Is the worst-case scenario tolerable or intolerable?Of the voluminous research on risk, remarkably little of it actually analyzes how real businesspeople make real decisions in the real world. An exception is a study done by professor Zur Shapira in 1991. He asked about seven hundred high-level executives from the United States and Israel to describe how they think about risk in different scenarios. What he found likely came as a disappointment to architects of fancy decision trees. The executives surveyed didnt calculate the mathematical expected value of various scenarios. They didnt draft long lists of pros and cons. Instead, most simply tried to get a handle on a single yes-or-no question: Could they tolerate the outcome if the worst-case scenario happened? So the first thing you want to ask of a possible opportunity is, If the worst-case scenario happens, would I still be in the game? If the worst-case scenario is the serious tarnishing of your reputation, or loss of all your economic assets, or something otherwise career-ending, dont accept that risk. If the worst-case scenario is getting fired, losing a little bit of time or money, or experiencing discomfort, as long as you have a solid and reliable Plan Z in place, you will still be in the game, and should be open to taking on that risk.Can you change or reverse the decision midway through? Is Plan B doable?Management consulting firms frequently offer to pay for analysts to go to business school in exchange for a two-year commitment to work at the firm after graduation. Analysts who take the offer are making a four-year commitment in total: two years in school, two years at the same firm afterward. Precommitting four years of your life is riskier than career choices that allow you to pivot to Plan B if you decide something is not going well or if some other amazing opportunity came up. So when assessing a risk, if you realize you made a mistake, could you reverse your decision easily? Could you get to a Plan B or Plan Z relatively quickly? If the answer is no, the opportunity is riskier and should be approached more cautiously.Michael Dell famously dropped out of the University of Texas to start Dell Computer. But his start-up wasnt a sure thing at the time, so he managed the risk by hedging his bets. Instead of dropping out of college for good, he applied for a formal leave of absence so that if the company seemed to be going south, he could return to his studies with no problem. Dell took a prudent risk that preserved the option to reverse his decision and go to Plan B.Youll never be fully certain. Dont conflate uncertainty with risk.There will always be uncertainty about career opportunities and risks. Uncertainty is an ingredient of risk. And the more compelling and complex the opportunity, the more uncertainty tends to surround it. In all situations, you simply cannot know everything about all possible pros and cons. While you dont want to make career moves on 0 percent information, you also dont want to wait till you have 100 percent informationor else youll wait forever. Uncertainty makes people uncomfortable. But uncertainty does not automatically mean something is risky. Jetting off to vacation in Hawaii with no set itinerary introduces many uncertainties about what will transpire, but its not particularly risky. After all, how likely are you to have a bad time in Hawaii? When Sheryl Sandberg came to Silicon Valley from Washington, there were innumerable uncertainties. (Would California be a good place to raise a family? How would her reputation suffer if Google was a flop?) Had she treated all the unknowables associated with entering a new industry as serious risks, she would never have joined Google and would have missed out on a breakout opportunity. When its not clear how something will play out, many people avoid it altogether. But the biggest and best opportunities frequently are the ones with the most question marks. Dont let uncertainty lull you into overestimating the risk.Consider age and stage. What will the risks be to you in a few years?Age and career stage affect your level of risk. Generally, the downside consequence of failure is lower the younger you are. If you make mistakes in your twenties and thirties, you have plenty of time to recover both financially and reputationally. You have parents and family to fall back on. You are less likely to have kids or a mortgage. Just as financial advisors counsel young people to invest in stocks more than bonds, its important to be especially aggressive accepting career risk when you are young. This is a main reason many young people start companies, travel around the world, and do other relatively high-risk career moves: the downside is lower. If something worthwhile will be riskier in five years than it is now, be more aggressive about taking it on now. As you age and build more assets, your risk tolerance shifts.'

Adapted from my book with Ben Casnocha -- learn more about risk at The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career.'

ARTICLE: WILL SOFTWARE ELIMINATE PHYSICAL RETAIL? NOT QUITE.'

Is physical retail doomed?'

Last week, in conversation with Sarah Lacy of PandoDaily, Marc Andreessen argued that the retail industry is over.'

In one sense, the impending transformation is clear to intelligent Silicon Valley insiders. In the same way technology disrupted the bloated cost structure of the newspaper industry, technology will inevitably disrupt huge swaths of the physical retail industry. Retail suffers from a heavy real estate cost structure, inventory management challenges, and a high cost of acquiring physical customers. This high cost-structure makes retailers vulnerable even to small decreases in revenue. E-commerce companies, meanwhile, boast broad inventory from warehouses, low prices, home deliverability, and amazing, fun customer experiences look at a One Kings Lane. In particular, software tends to improve at the pace of Moores law enabling even better online shopping experiences in the future.'

So its easy to see why my friend Marc (among others) augur the eventual annihilation of physical retail.'

But its a mistake to think that the offline retail industry--which currently represents 95% of retail buying versus e-commerces 5%--will shrink to next to nothing.'

Retail Retailored'

Software will not replace all offline retail, but will be used instead to transform certain offline retail experiences. Software can bring more customers to the stores, increase conversion in the store, reduce overall costs for the retailer via better analytics on supply and demand, and -- for the customer -- create a radically better real life shopping experience.'

Of course, one thing that I love about being venture capital futurists is that we can put our money where our mouth is. To elaborate, here are some Greylock software investments that are transforming the world of offline retail.'

First, Shopkick explicitly deploys the power of smartphones to enhance your shopping experience. At home, you can identify the products that interest you and have those guide your feet together with earning rewards in a unique universal loyalty program. As a testimony to its success, the app is already one of the 5 most widely used shopping apps in the country according to Nielsen (alongside eBay and Amazon.) Its software amplifying retail.'

Second, Wrapp brings social commerce to retail, by enabling social gift cards on mobile. These cards spread through social action on mobile and social platforms, both for special occasions like birthdays and for more general purposes like corporate gifting. The Wrapp gift cards then bring you to redeem at retail locations. Software amplifying (and socializing) retail.'

Third, Swipely brings easy analytics and marketing tools to local restaurants and retailers for free, bundled with transparent payment processing at standard prices. These analytics can then can drive smarter communications, marketing offers, and loyalty programs. Here, software enhancing the retail experience for consumers through small merchant CRM and loyalty.'

Fourth, Cardspring magnifies the capabilities of your payment credit cards. Retailers can create marketing and loyalty programs that consumers can add to their payment cards and when the card is used at the specific retail store, the loyalty program automatically applies. Again, software that both moves customers to retail and enhances the experience.'

Finally, Coupons.com moves the entire world of coupons to the digital world. Many millions of consumers deploy coupons every day its easier for them to discover, collect, and deploy those coupons via the internet than newspapers. Software driving retail engagement.'

There are also examples of great entrepreneurs building software to facilitate online to offline retail transactions. After all, I can't dine out on my computer, but Opentable makes it easier to book a restaurant reservation. I can't receive medical treatments online, but Zocdoc makes it easier to book a doctor visit. My Macbook can't cut my hair, but Demandforce makes it easier to schedule a haircut. My Android phone can't drive me to the airport, but Uber can book a taxi. Again: Software amplifies and transforms an offline retail experience."

Software is clearly transforming the world, sometimes by eating it. However, where the digestion metaphor can choke (eat this!) is that software really becomes part of the fluid genetic code of the real world. Its still the real world, just with software genetically embedded.'

The important trend to think about is software amplifies retail. I believe that old-fashioned retailers are on their way out. Innovative physical retailers will develop an interactive, in-store mobile overlay a la Shopkick, implement more sophisticated payment processing and CRM systems a la Swipely, and so on. And youll see some otherwise pure e-commerce companies leverage the unique capabilities of physical commercelike Warby Parker, which is investing in real world showrooms for its eyewear.'

In short, software will disrupt and eliminate many traditional retailers, yet at the same time enable new innovations for retailers that can adapt to the future. The Start-Up of You becomes The Start-Up of Retail.'

(Thanks to Ben Casnocha, Josh Elman, Hjalmar Winbladh, Angus Davis, Ron Johnson, and Cyriac Roeding for their feedback.)'

(Image credit)'

ARTICLE: CONNECT TO HUMAN NETWORKS TO FIND BREAKOUT OPPORTUNITIES'

Earlier this month, I wrote that breakout opportunities are what transform your career. Opportunities do not float like clouds. They are firmly attached to individuals. If youre looking for an opportunity, youre really looking for people. If youre evaluating an opportunity, youre really evaluating people. If youre trying to marshal resources to go after an opportunity, youre really trying to enlist the support and involvement of other people. A company doesnt offer you a job, people do. Opportunities flow through congregations of people. Those with good ideas and information tend to hang out with one another. You will get ahead if you can tap the circles that dish the best opportunities. In fact, its how people have gotten ahead for centuries.'

Roll the clock back more than two hundred years. In 1765 Joseph Priestley, a young amateur scientist and minister, was running experiments in his makeshift laboratory in the English countryside. He was exceptionally bright but isolated from any peers, until one December day when he traveled into London to attend the Club of Honest Whigs. The brainchild of Benjamin Franklin, the club was like an eighteenth-century version of the networking groups that exist today. Franklin, who was in England promoting the interests of the American colonies, convened his big-thinking friends at the London Coffee House on alternating Thursdays. Their conversations on science, theology, politics, and other topics of the day were freewheeling and reflected the coffeehouse setting. Priestley attended to get feedback on a book idea about scientists progress on understanding electricity. He got much more than feedback. Franklin and his friends swelled in support of Priestley: they offered to open their private scientific libraries to him. They offered to review drafts of his manuscript. They offered their friendship and encouragement. Crucially, Priestley reciprocated all the way: he was committed to circulating his ideas and discoveries through his social network, thereby strengthening the interpersonal bonds, refining the ideas themselves, and increasing the likelihood that his new connections would help him exploit whatever opportunities were found. In short, Priestleys night at the coffeehouse dramatically altered the trajectory of his career. According to author Steven Johnson in his book The Invention of Air, Priestley went from semi-isolation to plugging into an existing network of relationships and collaborations that the coffeehouse environment facilitated. He went on to have an illustrious scientific and writing career, famously discovering the existence of oxygen. The London Coffee House went on to become a central hub of innovation in British society.'

It wasnt Franklins first time rounding up friends for regular discussion. Forty years earlier, he had convinced twelve of his most ingenious friends (as he referred to them in his autobiography) in Philadelphia to form a club dedicated to mutual improvement. Meeting one night a week, these young men recommended books, ideas, and contacts to one another. They fostered self-improvement through discussions on philosophy, morals, economics, and politics. They called the club the Junto (hoon-toe). The Junto became a private forum for brainstorming and a surreptitious instrument for leading public opinion. The group generated a bounty of ideas, such as the first public library, volunteer fire departments, the first public hospital, police departments, and paved streets. They also collaborated to execute on opportunities. For example, one idea that emerged from the Junto was the need for a liberal arts higher education that would blend study of the classics with practical knowledge. Franklin teamed up with fellow Junto member William Coleman and several others to start what is now the University of Pennsylvania. It was the first multidisciplinary university in America.'

Benjamin Franklin is often remembered as driven, self-educated, and endlessly inventivea quintessential entrepreneur. But what we find most entrepreneurial about Franklin has less to do with his personal talents and traits and more to do with how he facilitated the talents of others. Franklin believed that if he brought together a bunch of smart people in a relaxed atmosphere and let the conversation flow, good opportunities would emerge. He set in motion a trend that the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville noted in Democracy in America, his 1835 classic assessment of the young United States: nothing was as distinctive about America as its peoples proclivity to form associations around interests, causes, and values.'

By the early 1900s, human networks were booming. At his death, J. P. Morganone of the most entrepreneurial businessmen of his timebelonged to nearly twenty-four different associations. A Chicago attorney named Paul Harris may not be as famous as Morgan, but his impact is arguably comparable. In search of more clients for his law practice and a cure for his loneliness, he brought together a group of local businesspeople who could help one another in their careers and enjoy one anothers fellowship. They called their group Rotary because the location of their weekly meeting rotated among the members. As the club grew in size, to maintain informality, they fined members who addressed other members by anything but their first name. No surnames or titles or Mister allowed. Today, there are more than 1.2 million remarkably engaged members in 30,000 Rotary clubs around the world.'

Small, informal networks are still uniquely efficient at circulating ideas. Its why we still have local PTAs and alumni groups from schools. Book groups. Beekeeping clubs. Conferences and industry meetings. If you want to increase your opportunity flow, join and participate in as many of these groups and associations as possible. If you dont know where to start, go to www.meetup.com. Meetup helps ninety thousand interest groups in forty-five thousand cities organize events to bring like-minded people together. Scott Heiferman, Meetups CEO, says, DIY is becoming DIO: do it ourselves. More people are turning to each other to make things happen. This is IWe in action.'

There are plenty of networks at your fingertips where you are already an insideryou just have to be a little creative. Think about alumni groups. Sure, high school and college alumni associations are indeed good sources of opportunities. But youre also an alumnus from organizations youve worked at in the past.'

My membership in a notable corporate alumni group in Silicon Valley has opened the door to a number of breakout opportunities. After eBay acquired PayPal, the members of the PayPal executive team each moved on to new projects but stayed connected, investing in one anothers companies, hiring one another, sharing office space, and the like. There are no membership dues, no secret handshakes, no monthly meetings; just informal collaboration. Yet these connections have spawned some of the most successful projects in Silicon Valley. As a result, the group got the name the PayPal mafia.'

What is it about this network that makes it such a uniquely rich source of opportunities?'

First, each individual is high-quality. This is fundamental: A group is only as good as its members. The network is only as good as its nodes. Evaluate a group by evaluating the individual people.'

Second, the gang has something in commonthe shared experience of PayPal, and the interests and values that led everyone there. Shared experiences lead to trust, which leads to peoples sharing information and opportunities. All opportunity-rich networks have a common denominator. Conference attendees are all interested in the topic of the conference; a congregation at a church shares a faith; Franklins Junto members were all intellectually curious.'

Third, theres geographic density. Collaboration happens best when information and ideas can bounce quickly to and from all the interested parties, ideally in the same physical place. Thats why Franklin assembled a small group of friends in a single room in Philadelphia and a single coffeehouse in London. Its why Rotary Clubs were initially capped at twelve members.'

Fourth, theres a strong ethos of sharing and cooperation. For a network to be valuable, everyone has got to want to invest in that network by pushing information and ideas through it.'

One of the biggest opportunities of my career was the chance to start LinkedIn in 2003. A mere five months after eBay acquired PayPal, I had assembled a team of six people working full-time in an office. I was able to get the business off the ground so quickly because I had a network of friends to serve as cofounders, early employees, and investors. I asked two former colleagues from Socialnet, a former college classmate, and a former colleague from Fujitsu to cofound the company with me. Peter Thiel and Keith Rabois from the PayPal mafia and a few others invested in the business. A former colleague from PayPal even provided LinkedIns first office space. An appropriate founding for a business with the tagline "Relationships Matter.

To recap some of the qualities of the PayPal mafia: high-quality people, a common bond, an ethos of sharing and cooperation, concentrated in a region and industry. These make it rich in opportunity flow, and the same factors make any network and association worth your while.'

Finally, the only thing better than joining groups is starting your own. Start your own mafiayour own group, meetup, or association with PayPal mafia characteristics. A laid-back atmosphere encourages candor, intellectual risk taking, and ultimately leads to the generation of better and more interesting ideas. It doesnt even have to be a regular thing. Organizing a Saturday brunch with a dozen ex-coworkers from your previous company only offers upside. And dont forget, when you are the creator and central node of a group, its like having a courtside seat at a basketball game: you wont miss a thing.'

Steven Johnson says, Chance favors the connected mind. Connect your mind to as many networks as did Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Priestley, J. P. Morgan, and others, and youll be one step closer to spotting and seizing those game-changing opportunities that great careers are made of.'

Learn more about winning career strategy in my book with Ben Casnocha titled The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career.'

ARTICLE: IF, WHY, AND HOW FOUNDERS SHOULD HIRE A PROFESSIONAL CEO'

Twenty years ago, the classic startup model was to have young founders start a breakthrough company, then bring in grey hair in the form of experienced executives once it was time to scale the business. Key examples included Cisco, Yahoo, eBay, Google, and many smaller companies. In the last decade, however, that common wisdom has shifted, at least for consumer internet companies. The new received wisdom is that the best entrepreneurs can stay CEO through the entire growth cycle of the company. Think of Jeff Bezos, Larry Ellison, or the late Steve Jobs. My partners at Greylock and I have invested in a number of young founding CEOs who match this pattern and are doing a fantastic job leading their companies through hypergrowth, such as Brian Chesky of AirBnB and Drew Houston of Dropbox. The question is, why has this shift occurred?Last year, Ben Horowitz of Andreessen Horowitz articulated a well-thought-out philosophy on why he prefers to back Founder-CEOs and keep them in charge as the company grows. His essay, Why We Prefer Founding CEOs lays out three key ingredients that great founding CEOs tend to have, and that professional CEOs often lack:'

Bens point is that without these three key ingredients, a CEO wont be able to maintain the rapid product innovation that is a prerequisite for success in todays startup world. Ben cites Google and Cisco as rare exceptions where a professional CEO helped steer a company to market leadership and that the evidence is one-sided and overwhelming that you shouldnt bring in a professional CEO. In other words, Ben asserts that bringing in a professional CEO should be a last resort for a founder.And yet, many of the greatest success stories of the internet era involve founder/professional CEO partnerships. During the dot com era, Yahoo!s Tim Koogle helped build Jerry Yang and Dave Filos startup into the worlds most valuable internet company.

Meanwhile, Meg Whitman helped Pierre Omidyars eBay become the second most powerful ecommerce company in the world (trailing only Amazon). The Web 2.0 era provides successful examples like Joe Kennedy and Tim Westergren at Pandora, and the current social era provides even more, including Dick Costolo at Twitter and Tony Zingale and Dave Hersh at Jive.Sure, there are plenty of cautionary tales about how VCs have ousted founders in favor of professional CEOs who run companies into the ground. But its hard to call the evidence one-sided and overwhelming when there are so many strong counterexamples.Noam Wasserman of Harvard Business School has been studying what he calls the founders dilemma for nearly a decade. In his academic paper, Rich versus King, he looked at 460 American startups from the 2000s. His statistical analysis showed that, paradoxically, founders maximized the value of their equity stakes by giving up the CEO position and board control: The results show that, controlling for company size, age, and other factors, the more decision-making control kept (at both the CEO and board levels), the lower the value of the entrepreneurs equity stake.In another study of 212 startups, Wasserman found that it was rare for Founder-CEOs to run their companies in the long term; less than half were still CEO after 3 years, and less than a quarter of the CEOs of the companies that reached an IPO were Founder-CEOs.Given the evidence that bringing in an outside CEO can often pay off financially and, more importantly, in terms of overall scale and impact of the company, its important to explore the possibilityeven if it isnt your first choice. I speak from personal experience, since I hired and partnered with a CEO, Jeff Weiner, very successfully at LinkedIn five years after co-founding the company.Once you decide to evaluate the option of bringing in a professional CEO for your start-up, the real questions are, Should I replace myself? If the answer is yes, then How do we make the transition? And once you make the transition successfully, How can I play a constructive long term co-founder role at the company?How do I know when to replace myself?I love the early stages of building a company. The small team, building a brand-new product, out-innovating complacent incumbentsnot only is the experience fresh and exciting, it also focuses on the things most founders loveespecially technical ones: Solving interesting problems, developing new technologies, devising a unique strategy. But if youre successful, the job of being CEO shifts dramatically over time. All of a sudden, you need to focus on a different set of challenges and concerns like establishing standard procedures and managing a large number of employees.To remain successful, you have to be passionate about that kind of work as well. Ask yourself, What am I focused on? What am I world-class at? What am I really committed to? The answers will help you determine if you should bring in a CEO.In my experience, CEOs need to derive satisfaction from the nuts and bolts of building a company, not just building product and articulating the vision. They need to be passionate about leadership, management, and organizational processes as the company scales.To be a successful growth-stage CEO, you need to be ready to manage a 1,000 person organization and devote substantial time to time consuming things like running meetings and other business process. You cant just do the exciting stuff like making the final call on product and speaking at conferences, while shuffling off everything else to the mythical COO who loves doing all the dirty work and doesnt want any of the credit.I went through this self-examination while I was still CEO of LinkedIn. I have always been passionate and committed, both to the company, and to its mission. I want to enable individual professionals to have more successful careers and to increase the productivity of mankind across entire industries and countries. I want a company that lives up to the original standard that Hewlett-Packard set for Silicon Valleya great place for high-quality people to work that provides an experience that would continue to benefit them even after they move on to other things.But as we scaled from a handful of people in my living room to dozens of people at an office, I saw the job of the CEO shifting. At 50 people and beyond, a CEO increasingly has to focus on process and organization, and that wasnt what I was passionate about. For example, I didnt like running a weekly staff meeting. I could do it, but I did so reluctantly, not enthusiastically. Id rather be solving intellectual challenges and figuring out key strategies, not debating which employees should get a promotion, or configuring project timelines.I co-founded LinkedIn in 2003, and by 2005, after asking myself the key questions about my passion, focus, and commitment, I knew I wanted to bring in a CEO. When I brought this up with my main VC, David Sze at Greylock, he had the same reaction I suspect I would have had: Are you sure? Couldnt we just hire a COO and have you stay as CEO?I had thought about the COO option, but I knew that the company needed someone who felt like they owned the ball. And I was confident I could partner well with a CEO, given my experience partnering with the various CEOs of companies being on the board. Whats more, the kind of person who has the capacity to be a great leader usually wants to be CEO, not COO. Sheryl Sandberg is one of the few great leaders who has been willing to be COO, and even then, shes a unique COO.At the time we began the search, I wouldnt have believed how long the process would take.After more than a year of searching, we brought Dan Nye in as LinkedIns new CEO at the beginning of 2007. Dan Nye came to us as CEO with a strong organizational background, having been a general manager at both Intuit and Advent, where he had responsibility for organizations many times the size of the early LinkedIn. In addition to strong capabilities, Dan is also perfect on integrity and culture. My idea when hiring Dan was that I could handle the product, and he could handle everything else. Dan helped us evolve LinkedIn from a product-focused startup into a complete company. During his time as CEO, he built a real sales department, rebuilt the executive team, and doubled the size of the company. But after a couple of years, I realized that as we continued to make major changes to the product, we needed a CEO who would own product as well.My mistake was thinking you could divorce product strategy from the CEO role. It was a mistake related to the broken grey-haired supervision approach to professional CEOs. 20 years ago, you could count on product cycles lasting years, which meant that constantly developing new products and refining the vision was relatively less important than aggressive execution. The professional CEO back then just had to be a superb executor for the founders vision. The rise of internet time has reduced product cycles to months and weeks. As such, a CEO cant focus solely on scaling concernstoday, the CEO has to be involved in the product.So I decided to step back in temporarily as CEO and tried to find a new CEO with consumer internet product experience and organizational experience at scale. (Dan went on to continue being a very successful company builder, becoming the CEO of Rocket Lawyer and, among other successes, quadrupling its revenues.)James Slavet, a partner at Greylock, introduced me to Jeff Weiner. James and Jeff had worked together at Yahoo!, and Jeff at the time was also an executive-in-residence at Greylock.

As I got to know Jeff, I became convinced that he was the right choice to LinkedIn. I believed that Jeffs experience at Yahoo! could help us by spreading a deep focus on consumer product insight and strategy throughout the entire company.'

We named Jeff CEO of LinkedIn in the middle of 2009, about four years after I first approached David Sze about replacing myself.How do we make the transition?If its ideal for a CEO to have the knowledge, moral authority, and commitment of a founder, the answer is simple: Your transition process should bring the new CEO in as a co-founder of the company, not as an adult supervisor. Jack Dorsey has said as much: Companies have multiple founding moments. I consider Dick Costolo to be a founding member of Twitter. Dick wasnt named CEO until 2010, four years after the companys official start.Think back to the list of all the successful Founder/CEO pairings. With almost no exceptions, four things were true:1. The decision to step back from being CEO is a function of self-realization. It doesnt work if the plan is being externally imposed by investors, for all the reasons Ben H. outlined. If youre passionate about the nuts and bolts of building your company, and your VC simply thinks they know better, its probably a mistake to acquiesce.2. The outside CEO was brought in early, so that he or she could play a real role in shaping the product, business, organization, and culture of the company. There is one exception to this pattern, which is when a company has lost its way, and the new CEO is essentially re-launching the company. The classic example here is Lou Gerstner, who transformed IBM from a failing hardware company to a services powerhouse.3. The original team of founders was a small group of two to three people, making it easier to form strong co-founder bonds. Being able to build a trusting relationship is critical. In the cases of both Yahoo! and Google, Jerry/Dave/Tim and Larry/Sergey/Eric built warm and trusting relationships that lasted for years.4. The new CEO had prior experience running a large organization. The whole point of hiring someone from the outside is to bring in skills and experience you dont have, which will help scale the company. Here, Sheryl Sandberg represents the classic exampleher management and people skills were brought in to complement Mark Zuckerbergs great product vision and strategy. Notice how even as COO rather than CEO, Sheryl is accorded co-founder status, and is the lynchpin of the companys management team and strategic decision-making.Yahoo! presents a particularly fascinating example of these principles at work. When Tim Koogle came in as CEO in 1995, all four principles applied: The founders knew they wanted a CEO, Tim came in early, he formed a tight management triumvirate with the founders, and he had experience running large organizations from his time at Motorola. Later Yahoo CEOs failed to follow these principles, largely sidelining the founders until Jerry Yangs return.More recently, Marissa Mayer joined Yahoo at the Lou Gerstner phaseeveryone acknowledges that Yahoo! needs to be remade. While her success is far from certain, if she does succeed, she will be viewed as a re-founder, not just a management caretaker.My own experience bringing Jeff Weiner into LinkedIn stuck pretty close to these four principles.1. As Ive already detailed, the decision to bring in a professional CEO was one I initiated back in 2007, after a lot of self-examination.2. While LinkedIn was already six years old when we brought Jeff in, it was still a relatively small company. Jeff was our 338th employee, and helped us launch our Talent

Solutions business, which is now a key revenue driver for us.3. Thanks to our strong mutual connections via Greylock, Jeff and I were able to bond and build a relationship both before and during the process of bringing him on to the team.4. When Jeff was an EVP at Yahoo! he ran a 3,000-employee division. Not only was that far larger than LinkedIn at the time, its about as many employees as we have today!What long term role can I play in our company?I wanted to make sure that people made the shift from looking to me for answers to taking their cues from Jeff. Bringing in a CEO is like performing a brain transplantyou need to wire in a whole new set of connections. If the founder is still in the building, its all too easy for people to keeping checking with him on every decision, rather than with the CEO.When Jeff came in as CEO, I booked a hefty amount of travel for his first 6 months. When employees tried calling me to double-check a decision, I replied, Sorry, Im in Rome, talk to Jeff. Jeff needed build up his own connectivity within the organization. By the time I returned from Europe, those connections were hard-wired.For Jeffs part, he went above and beyond to immerse himself in the company. For example, just a few months after Jeff joined LinkedIn, several engineers were sitting around at midnight in between bug fixes for what ultimately turned into a very late night product launch that extended into the wee early morning. One of the engineers decided to pull a graph of their new CEOs login activity on LinkedIn.com. People were shocked: the only time period during the launch when Jeff was not consistently logged into the site was between 3:30 4:00 AM. It turned out he was obsessed with the product quality just like a true founder. To this day, Jeff is renowned for being one of LinkedIns most active users and is known for his ability to catch bugs before our developers.Today, as Executive Chairman, my office at LinkedIn is next to Jeffs, and when Im not on the road or at Greylock, Im on the LinkedIn campus most of the week. I enjoy helping the team on strategy, corporate and business development, and product vision. The most important thing I do, though, is sync up with Jeff every week about whats on his mind. In our catch-up meetings, Im able and willing to challenge his ideas. Its hard for a CEO to get honest feedback and candid advice; so, provided you do not undercut him or her in the organization, as a founder you can play a uniquely helpful role in this respect. (And any CEO you hire should be eager to accept your honest counsel.) When it works, it makes the loneliest place in an organizationthe CEOs corner officesomewhat less lonely and potentially a lot more effective.Of course, it might be that youd rather transition out of a regular role after hiring a CEO. This can work, too. After bringing in Meg Whitman to run eBay, Pierre founded the Omidyar Network to make philanthropic investments, and returned to his native Hawaii where hes done wonderful work for the community where he grew up. Hes still actively involved in eBay as chairman of the board, but hes not at the office every week.Conclusion20 years ago, venture capitalists were in a hurry to bring in professional CEOs. Today, many of the same VC firms are busy touting their support for long-term Founder-CEOs. Both approaches can work, which means that as an entrepreneur, you should focus less on whats fashionable, and more on whats right for you. This is a highly personal decision, and the right answer depends on you and your teamincluding your co-founders and your VCs. You might be a Steve Jobs, or you might be a Pierre Omidyar. As an investor, Im willing to back you, even if youre not sure which one you are yet. In every investment we make, we hope that the Founder-CEO will be able to lead the company to success, but if not, and if you realize as I did that you want to bring in a professional CEO, well work with you to find someone who is a true partner.So as it turns out, Ben was right. You always do want a Founder-CEO. But that person doesnt always have to be the Founding CEO. Being there at the start isnt the only path to being a founder. Founder is a state of mind, not a job description, and if done right, even CEOs who join after day 1 can become Founders.'

ARTICLE: BREAKOUT OPPORTUNITIES ARE WHAT ACCELERATES YOUR CAREER'

Success begins with opportunities. Opportunities are like the snap to the quarterback in football. You still have to move the ball down the field; you still have to execute. But without a snap to the quarterback, theres no touchdown. For a young lawyer, an opportunity could mean being assigned to work with the smartest partner in the firm. For an artist, it could be a last-minute offer (perhaps due to a cancellation) to exhibit at a prominent museum. For a student, it could mean being awarded a rare scholarship to travel and do research.'

If finding these opportunities were a matter of simply walking into a store, rifling through a dusty bin of opportunities, picking one, and then checking out, the hierarchy of power in the world would look quite a bit different. Of course, it doesnt work that way. Its up to youwith the help of your networkto go out and find and develop professional opportunities for yourself. And not just any old opportunity will do. Entrepreneurs dont start businesses just anywhere; they channel the mind-set and skills weve been discussing into finding the great business opportunities. Likewise, in order to accomplish something significant in your career, you need to focus on finding and capitalizing on those great career opportunities: the opportunities that will extend your competitive advantage and accelerate your Plan A or Plan B.'

In a start-up, growth usually isnt slow and steady. Instead, unusually consequential opportunitiescertain breakthroughs, deals, discoveriesrocket the company forward and accelerate the rate of growth. Look at Groupon. For the first year or so of its existence it hobbled along as a site youve probably never heard of called The Point, which organized groups of people who wanted to pledge unified support for social and civic causes. Andrew Mason, the sites proprietor, noticed the sites users were most engaged when they banded together to increase their buying power. He saw this as an opportunity to break into a different niche. So he pivoted to a new plan and built a site (in a matter of weeks) that exclusively offered group discounts to consumers. Thanks to his fast action and superb execution, this move massively accelerated the growth trajectory of the company, eventually transforming The Point into Groupon and the 10,000+ person company it is today. But no start-up enjoys astronomical growth foreverat least not without continuing to find new breakthrough opportunities. As Groupons growth has been challenged by competition, Andrew and his teammates are looking for new opportunities. A promising one is mobile, location-based deals for consumers on the go. This venture, Groupon Now, allows retailers with perishable inventory (such as restaurants) to bring customers into their stores at otherwise unpopular hours. If it succeeds, it will set in motion another huge acceleration in growth. Groupons trajectory, in other words, looks more like the reality graph above.'

Careers, like start-ups, are also punctuated with breakouts. On a typical resumeand even on a LinkedIn profiletheres a reverse chronological listing of jobs held, all presented in the same type size and font. But on its face this is misleading. Our professional lives are not a sequence of equally important jobs. There are always breakout projects, connections, specific experiences, and yes, strokes of luckthat lead to unusually rapid career growth.'

Consider the famous career of George Clooney. In 1982, the young man from Kentucky moved to Hollywood, like so many before him, with a dream of becoming a movie star. He had a few things in his favor: good looks, some natural talent, a strong work ethic, and a couple family connections. Yet after twelve years of auditioning he had only landed occasional appearances on B-list television shows. Clooney was a long way from motion pictures. That all changed in 1994, when he caught wind of an opportunity, hustled to seize it, and catapulted his career to new heights.'

Warner Bros. was producing an expensive, fast-paced, gritty medical drama called ER, with a script so exciting and fresh and unlike anything else on TV that, assuming it actually made it to the airwaves, it had to either flame out or succeed spectacularly, says Kimberly Potts, in her book on Clooney. When one of Clooneys friends showed him a copy of the script, he knew right away it had the potential to be his breakout opportunity. So he didnt wait for ER producers to reach out. Instead, Clooney picked up the phone and called the executive producer to inform him that the actor wasnt going to let anyone else get the lead doctor role. They invited him to audition. He soon got a call-back with good news. "I just got a career," Clooney said to a friend, after hanging up the phone. Indeed, his career, his entire life and the lives of those around him were about to take off on a whole new trajectory. The show was a huge hit. Riding its success, he left television and pursued his dream of being on the big screen. After a few so-so movies, he landed a leading role in the movie Out of Sight and then the blockbuster film Oceans Eleven, the first of a highly successful trilogy. And he was soon among the leading stars in Hollywoodin a fraction of the time it had taken him to land that game-changing role on ER.'

So how did Clooney recognize the ER role for the breakout opportunity that it was? Well, he was not certain it would be a breakout. You can never be certain. Golden opportunities are not wrapped in pretty packaging with a clear label; killer job opportunities are rarely advertised on job boards. But ER had some telling characteristics, and he picked up on them. One key fact was it was time sensitive. Breakout opportunities are competitive -- many people want them -- so you have act quickly or you miss it. Another was that Clooney hadnt yet played the lead role on a major network drama. It would be a challenge. A career move that makes you feel in over your head stretches you in new dimensions and usually contains significant upside.'

It may be tempting to dismiss Clooneys breakout opportunity as only good luck. Was Clooney simply in the right place at the right time? Yes, and there is an element of luck to that. But you can develop habits of behavior and habits of thinking that increase the likelihood that you find yourself in the right place at the right time. You can, in other words, deliberately increase the quality and quantity of career opportunitieseven if you dont know what and where they are just yet.'

We describe how to do this in depth in our book The Start-Up of You and will touch on some of the high level themes in future posts here.'

(Photo: Flickr)'

ARTICLE: HELP THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW WITH SMALL GIFTS'

Relationships are living, breathing things. Feed, nurture, and care about them: they grow. Neglect them: they die. The best way to strengthen a relationship is to jump-start the long-term process of give-and-take. Do something for another person--help. But how?'

Heres a good example. When Jack Dorsey was cofounding Squarethe mobile payments company that turns any smartphone into a device that accepts the swipe of a credit cardhe had loads of investor interest. For great entrepreneurs with a killer idea, its actually the investors who compete for the privilege to invest. Digg and Milk founder Kevin Rose had seen a prototype of the Square device and immediately realized the potential for small businesses. When he asked Jack if there was room for another person to join the initial round of funding, Jack told him it was fullthey didnt need more investors. That was that. But Kevin still wanted to be helpful. He noticed that Square didnt have a video demo on their website showing how the device worked. So he put together a hi-def video showing off the device and then showed the video to Jack just as an fyi. Impressed, Jack turned around and invited Kevin to invest in the full Series A round of financing. Kevin found a way to add value. He didnt ask for anything in returnhe just made the video and showed it to Jack. No strings attached. Not surprisingly, Jack appreciated the effort and returned the favor.'

Helping someone out means acknowledging that you are capable of helping. Reject the misconception that if youre less powerful, less wealthy, or less experienced, you have nothing to offer someone else. Everyone is capable of offering helpful support or constructive feedback. To be sure, youll be most helpful if you have the skills and experiences to help your allies. Pleasant friendships are nice, but the best-connected professionals are ones who can really help their allies. This is what makes a professional network and not simply a social one.'

Next, figure out what kind of help is helpful. Imagine sitting down to lunch with an acquaintance you just met and opening the conversation by saying, Im looking for a job in New York City. He puts down his fork, wipes the barbecue sauce off his face, looks you square in the eye, and replies, I know the perfect job for you. Is that helpful? Hardly. Since he likely has no idea what the perfect job means to you, a better response would have probed: Tell me more about your skills, interests, and background. Good intentions are never enough. To give helpful help you need to have a sense of your friends values and priorities so that your offer of help can be relevant and specific. What keeps him up at 2 a.m.? What are his talents? His interests? Asking

How can I help you?! immediately upon meeting someone is overeager. First you must know the person.'

Finally, once you understand his needs, challenges, and desires, think about how you can offer him a small gift. We dont mean an Amazon gift card or a box of cigars. We mean somethingeven something intangiblethat costs you almost nothing yet still is valuable to the other person. Classic small gifts include relevant information and articles, introductions, and advice. A really expensive big gift is actually counterproductiveit can feel like a bribe. Inexpensive yet thoughtful is best.'

When deciding what kind of gift to give, think about your unique experiences and skills. What might you have that the other person does not? For example, consider an extreme hypothetical. What kind of gift would be helpful to Bill Gates? Probably not introducing him to somebodyhe can meet whomever he wants. Probably not sending an article you read in the media about the Gates Foundationhe was probably interviewed for it. Probably not by investing in one of his projectshes doing fine money-wise. Instead, think about little things. For example, if youre in college, or have a good friend or sibling in college, you could send him information about some of the key cultural and technology-usage trends among the college set. Intel on what college studentsthe next generationare thinking or doing is always of interest yet hard to get no matter how much money you have. What specific things do you know or have that the other person does not? The secret behind stellar small gifts is that its something you can uniquely provide.'

Finally, if the best way to strengthen a relationship is to help the other person, the second best way is to let yourself be helped. As Ben Franklin recommended, If you want to make a friend, let someone do you a favor. Dont view help skeptically (What did I do to deserve this?) or with suspicion (Whats the hidden agenda here?). Well, sometimes second-guessing is warranted, but not usually. People like helping. If someone offers to introduce you to a person you really want to meet or offers to share assorted wisdom on an important topic, accept the help and express due gratitude. Everyone will feel goodand youll actually get closer to the person.'

This post adapted from my book on career strategy The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career, co-authored with Ben Casnocha.'

(Photo: Flickr "Ash-s")'

ARTICLE: HOW LARGE IS YOUR NETWORK? THE POWER OF 2ND AND 3RD DEGREE CONNECTIONS'

Imagine you receive a digital camera with a built-in memory card for your birthday. You bring it on a six-month trip to Africa where you wont have access to a computerso all the photos you want to keep must fit on that one memory card. When you first arrive you snap photos freely, and maybe even record some short videos. But after a month or so, the memory card starts filling up. Now youre forced to be more judicious in deciding how to use that storage. You might take fewer pictures. You might decide to reduce the quality/resolution of the photos you do take in order to fit more. Youll probably cut back on videos. Still, inevitably, youll hit capacity, at which point if you wish to take new photos youll have to delete old ones.'

Just as a digital camera cannot store an infinite number of photos and videos, you cannot maintain an infinite number of relationships. Which is why, even if you are judicious about your choices, at some point you hit a limit, and any new relationship means sacrificing an old one.'

The maximum number of relationships we can realistically managethe number that can fit on the memory card, as it wereis described as Dunbars Number, after evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar. But maybe it shouldnt be. In the early nineties, Dunbar studied the social connections within groups of monkeys and apes. He theorized that the maximum size of their overall social group was limited by the small size of their neocortex. It requires brainpower to socialize with other animals, so it follows that the smaller the primates brain, the less efficient it is at socializing, and the fewer other primates it can befriend. He then extrapolated that humans have an especially large neocortex and so should be able to more efficiently socialize with a great number of humans. Based on our neocortex size, Dunbar calculated that humans should be able to maintain relationships with no more than roughly 150 people at a time. To cross-check the theory, he studied anthropological field reports and other clues from villages and tribes in the hunter-gatherer era. Sure enough, he found the size of surviving tribes tended to be about 150. And when he observed modern human societies, he found that many businesses and military groups organize their people into cliques of about 150. To wit: Dunbars Number of 150.'

But Dunbars research is not exactly about the total number of people that any one person can know. The research focused on how many nonhuman primates (and humans, but only by extrapolation) can survive together in a tribe. Of course, group limits and the number of people you can know are closely related concepts, especially if you consider everyone in your life to be part of your social group. Yet most of us define our total social group more broadly than Dunbar did in his research. Survival in the modern world doesnt depend on having direct, face-to-face contact with everyone in our social network/group, as it did for the tribes he studied.'

Regardless of how you parse Dunbars research, what is definitely the case is that there is a limit to the number of relationships you can maintain, if for no other reason than the fact that we have only twenty-four hours in each day. But, contrary to popular understanding of Dunbars Number, there is not one blunt limit. There are different limits for each type of relationship. Think back to the digital camera. You can either take low-resolution photographs and store one hundred photos in total, or you can take high-resolution photographs and store forty. With relationships, while you can only have a few close buddies you see every day, you can stay in touch with many distant friends if you only email them once or twice a year.'

But theres a twist. While the number of close allies and weak ties you can keep up is limited, those arent your only connections. You can actually maintain a much broader social network that exceeds the size of the memory card. Its by smartly leveraging this extended network that you fully experience the power of I-to-the-We.'

Your allies, weak ties, and the other people you know right now are your first-degree connections. A la Dunbar, there are limits to the number of first-degree connections you can have at any one time. But your friends know people you dont know. These friends of friends are your second-degree connections. And those friends of friends have friends of their ownthose friends of friends of friends are your third-degree connections.'

Social network theorists use degree-of-separation terminology to refer to individuals who sit within your social network. A network is a system of interconnected things, like the worlds airports or the Internet (a network of computers and servers). A social network is a set of people and the connections that link them. Everyone you interact with in a professional context comprises your professional social network.'

Think of the times youve met someone and discovered you know people in common. The clerk at the local hardware store once hiked through Yosemite with your brother-in-law. Your new girlfriend is in the same bowling league as your boss. Its a small world, we say after such realizations. Its fun to make these unexpected connections. A busy city street can seem awash with strangers, so when we encounter a familiar face, we notice it.'

But is the world actually that small? Psychologist Stanley Milgram and his student Jeffrey Travers found that it is. In fact, its smaller and more interconnected than the occasional surprising mutual acquaintance might suggest. In 1967 they conducted a famous study in which they asked a couple hundred people in Nebraska to mail a letter to someone they knew personally who might in turn know a target stockbroker in Massachusetts. Travers and Milgram tracked how long it took for the letter to pass hands and reach its destination. On average, it took six different stops before it showed up at the stockbrokers home or office in Massachusetts. In other words, the original sender in Nebraska sat six degrees apart from the recipient in Massachusetts. It was this study that birthed the Six Degrees of Separation theory, and the credible idea that you share mutual acquaintances with complete strangers on the other side of the world.'

In 2001, sociologist Duncan Watts, inspired by Milgrams findings, led a more ambitious, rigorous study on a global scale. He recruited eighteen targets in thirteen countries. From an archival inspector in Estonia to a policeman in Western Australia to a professor in upstate New York, the targets were selected to be as diverse as possible. Then he signed up more than sixty thousand people from across the United States to participate in the test. They were to forward an email message to one of the eighteen targets, or to a friend who might know one of the targets. Amazingly, factoring in the emails that never made it to their destination, Watts found that Milgram had been right all along: the median distance that separated a participant from a target was between five and seven degrees.'

It is a small world, after all. Small because it is so interconnected.'

Milgrams and Wattss research shows planet Earth as one massive social network, with every human being connected to every other via no more than about six intermediary people. Its neat to ponder being connected to billions of people through your friends, and the practical implications for the start-up of you are significant as well. Suppose you want to become a doctor and would like to meet a premier M.D. in your specific field of interest. Youve heard that getting an introduction is the only way youll be able to meet her. The good news is that you know that you are at most only six degrees away from her. The bad news is that following Milgrams or Wattss procedureasking one good friend to forward an email and hope that six or seven email forwards later the email will arrive at the targets computeris neither efficient nor reliable. Even if it does arrive, the introduction would be highly diluted. Saying youre a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend doesnt quite carry enough heft to open doors.'

But if there were a master chart of the entire human social network, you could locate the shortest possible path from you to the doctor. Now, increasingly, there is. Out of an estimated one billion professionals in the world, well over 170 million of them are on LinkedIn. Now, you can search this network to find the connections and friends of connections who can introduce you to that all-star doctor with the fewest number of handoffs. You dont need to randomly forward an email and hope it arrives at your destination after six twists and turns.'

Heres where the caveat to the Six Degrees of Separation theory comes in. Academically, the theory is correct, but when it comes to meeting people who can help you professionally, three degrees of separation is what matters. Three degrees is the magic number because when youre introduced to a second- or third-degree connection, at least one person in an introduction chain personally knows the origin or target person. In this example: You> Karen> Jane> Sarah. Karen and Jane are in the middle, and both of them know either You or Sarahthe two people who are trying to connect. Thats how trust is preserved. If one additional degree of separation is added, a person in the middle of the chain will know neither You nor Sarah, and thus have no stake in making sure the introduction goes smoothly. After all, why would a person bother to introduce a total stranger (even if that stranger is a friend of a friend of a friend) to another total stranger?'

So, the extended network thats available to you professionally doesnt contain the roughly seven billion other humans on the planet who sit six degrees away. But it does contain all the people who sit two or three degrees away, because they are the people you can reach via an introduction. This is a large group. Suppose you have 40 friends, and assume that each friend has 35 other friends in turn, and each of those friends of friends has 45 unique friends of their own. If you do the math (40 35 45), thats 54,000 people you can reach via an introduction.'

Now you know why one of LinkedIns early marketing taglines was: Your Network Is Bigger Than You Think. It is!'

Adapted from my book with Ben Casnocha titled The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career. '

ARTICLE: ALLIES AND ACQUAINTANCES: TWO KEY TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS'

As I wrote in my previous post, each type of relationship in your life is different. Today, were going to focus on two types of relationships that especially matter in a professional context: allies and acquaintances.'

What makes someone an ally in your job and career? First, it's someone you consult regularly for advice. You trust his or her judgment. Second, you proactively share and collaborate on opportunities together. You keep your antennae especially attuned to an allys interests, and when it makes sense to pursue something jointly, you do so. Third, you talk up an ally to other friends. You promote his or her brand. When an ally comes into conflict, you defend him, and stand up for his reputation. And he does the same for you when times get tough. Finally, you are explicit about your bond. You might say to each other, Hey, were allies, right? How can we best help each other?"

Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, top producers and directors in Hollywood, have a legendary alliance. The essence of their alliance was well summed upby Howard: In a business that is so crazy, to actually know that there is somebody who is really smart, who you care about, who has your interests, and who is rowing in the same direction, is something of immense value.Thats an ally.'

I first met Mark Pincuswhile at PayPal in 2002. I was giving him advice on a start-up he was working on as my PayPal experiences were relevant. From our first conversation, I felt inspired by Marks wild creativity and how at times he seems to bounce off the walls with energy. Im more restrained in comparison, preferring to fit ideas into strategic frameworks instead of unleashing them fire-hose-style. Our different styles make conversation fun. But its our similar interests and vision that have made our collaborations so successful. We invested in Friendster together in 2002, at the dawn of social networking. In 2003 the two of us bought the Six Degrees patent, which covers some of the foundational technology of social networking. Mark then started his own social network, Tribe; I started LinkedIn. When Peter Thiel and I were set to put the first money into Facebook in 2004, I suggested that Mark take half of my investment allocation. As a matter of course, I wanted to involve Mark in any opportunity that seemed intriguing, especially one that played to his social networking background--its what you do in an alliance. In 2007, Mark called me to talk about his idea for Zynga, the social gaming company he cofounded and now leads. I knew almost immediately that I wanted to invest and join the board, which I did. Both of us thought Zynga and Facebook would be very strong companies, but no one could have predicted the astronomical heights of success.With an ally, you dont keep score, you just try to invest in the alliance as much as possible.'

What has sustained all this collaboration, despite the fact that the two of us are not official partners in a venture firm, for example? We are both driven by a passion for the Internet industry, especially the social networking space. We complement each other. We like each other as friends. Weve known each other for awhileit was several years before we thought of each other as allies. And theres another seemingly insignificant reason, but its important and worth noting: we both live in the San Francisco Bay Area. Physical proximity is actually one of the best predictors of the strength of a relationship, many studies show.'

An alliance is always an exchange, but not a transactional one. A transactional relationship is when your accountant files your tax returns and in exchange you pay him for his time. An alliance is when a coworker needs last-minute help on Sunday night preparing for a Monday morning presentation and even though youre busy, you agree to go over to his house and help.'

These volleys of communication and cooperation build trust. Trust, writesDavid Brooks, is habitual reciprocity that becomes coated by emotion. It grows when two people . . . slowly learn they can rely upon each other. Soon members of a trusting relationship become willing to not only cooperate with each other but sacrifice for each other.'

You cooperate and sacrifice because you want to help a friend in need but also because you figure youll be able to call on him in the future when youare the one in a bind. This isnt being selfish, its being human. Social animals do good deeds for one another in part because the deeds will be reciprocated at some point in time. With trusted professional allies, the reciprocation isnt immediate--i.e., you dont turn around the next day and say, Hey, I helped you with your presentation, now I want something back. Ideally, the notion of an exchange dissolves into the reality that you have intermingled fates. In other words, as the score keeping becomes less and less formal and as the expectation for reciprocal exchange stretches over a longer and longer period of time, a relationship goes from being an exchange partnership to being a true alliance.'

Allies, by the nature of the bond, are few in number. There are many more looser connections and acquaintances who also play a role in your professional life. These are folks you meet at conferences, old classmates, coworkers in other divisions, or just interesting people with interesting ideas who you come upon in day-to-day life. Sociologists refer to these contacts as weak ties: people with whom you have spent low amounts of low-intensity time (for example, someone you might only see once or twice a year at a conference, or only know online and not in person) but with whom youre still familiar and friendly.'

Weak ties in a career context were formally researched in 1973, when sociologist Mark Granovetter asked a random sample of Boston professionals who had just switched jobs how they found their new job. Of those who said they found their job through a contact, Granovetter then asked how frequently they saw the contact. He asked participants to mark whether they saw the person often (twice a week), occasionally (more than once a year but less than twice a week), or rarely (once a year or less).About 16 percent of the recipients said they found their job through a contact they saw often. The rest found their job through a contact they saw occasionally (55 percent) or rarely (27 percent). In other words, the contacts who referred jobs were weak ties.He summed up his conclusion in a paper appropriately called The Strength of Weak Ties: The friends you dont know very well are the ones who refer winning jobs.'

Granovetter accounts for this result by explaining thatsocial cliques, which are groups of people who have something in common, often limit your exposure to wildly new experiences, opportunities, and information. Because people tend to hang out in cliques, your good friends are usually from the same industry, neighborhood, religious group, and the like. The stronger your tie with someone, the more likely they are to mirror you in various ways, and the more likely you are to want to introduce them to your other friends.'

From an emotional standpoint, this is great. Its fun to do things in groups wjth people with whom you have a lot in common. But from an informational standpoint, Granovetter argues this interconnectedness is limiting because the same information recycles through your local network of like-minded friends. If a close friend knows about a job opportunity, you probably already know about it. Strong ties usually introduce redundancy in knowledge and activities and friend sets.'

In contrast, weak ties usually sit outside of the inner circle. Youre not necessarily going to introduce a looser connection to all of your other friends. Thus, theres a greater likelihood a weak tie will be exposed to new information or a job opportunity. This is the crux of Granovetters argument: Weak ties can uniquely serve as bridges to other worlds and thus can pass on information or opportunities you have not heard about. We would stress that its not that weak ties per se find you jobs; its that weak ties are likely to be exposed to information or job listings you havent seen. Weak ties in and of themselves are not especially valuable; what is valuable is the breadth and reach of the network.'

In the comments, I'd love to hear about your allies and acquaintances."

Adapted from my book with Ben Casnocha, The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career. Join our LinkedIn groupon career strategy.'

(Photo: Flickr)'

ARTICLE: YOUR NETWORK: PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT VS. PERSONAL CONTEXT'

In my previous post, I wrote about why relationships matter in your career. Yet, relationship can mean many things. It can be long-distance or proximate, project-only or long-term, emotionally closeor purely professional. There are bosses, coworkers, colleagues, and subordinates. There are friends, neighbors, family members, and long-lost acquaintances. There are people you relate to out of love, out of friendship, out of respect, and out of necessity. There are people you work with based on a detailed contract that legally specifies roles and responsibilities; there are people you work with where nothing is written down. The universality of the word relationship makes sense: the essence of how human beings relate to one another transcends situational differences.'

That said, therearekey differences in how relationships function based on the context. There are people you know solely in apersonalcontext. These include close personal friends and family. These are the people you call on a Saturday night, but not on a busy Monday morning at work. These are your childhood, high school or college friends who may be dear to you but are not necessarily on an even remotely similar career trajectory. These are the people with whom a shared spirituality and alignment of core values may matter. Online, you connect with these friends and family on Facebook. You share photos of last night's party and play CityVille or Texas Hold'Em. Your Facebook profile picture might be kooky, and whether you are single or in a relationship is a point of interest for all."

Then there are those you know solely in aprofessionalcontext. These include colleagues, industry acquaintances, customers, allies, business advisors, and service providers like your accountant or lawyer. You email these folks from your work address, not your personal Yahoo or Gmail account. Shared business goals and professional interests bring you together. Online, LinkedIn is where you connect with these trusted colleagues and valued acquaintances whom you recommend for jobs, collaborate with on professional projects, and tap for industry advice. Its where you share detailed information about your skill sets and work experience. Your headshot is professional. No one cares who you are or are not dating on LinkedIn. (Recent LinkedInresearchreveals in more depth how mindset differences play out on different social networks.)'

Generally, you know people primarily in a personalora professional context. The simple reason is etiquette and expectations. Its awkward if a co-worker confesses marital infidelity while standing around the proverbial water cooler. (Cue a scene from the TV show "The Office"...) And your idea of a fun weekend might not involve playing in a sandbox with your co-workers kids. The more important reason why personal and professional are separate relates to conflict of loyalties. For example, suppose a co-worker you consider a personal friend is screwing up on a big work project. If you dont speak up, you will be letting down other team members and your company (and therefore hurting your professional reputation); if you do speak up, your friend may resent you. Or suppose you and a co-worker are both up for promotion. When one of you advances and the other does not, it strains the friendship. For these reasons, it can be tricky to ask a close personal friend for career help because youre asking them to negotiate dueling loyalties: their duties as a professional and their duties as a friend.'

Now, its good to be friends with someone you work with. Its more fun. You may invite your coworker to your wedding. You may go winetasting with your boss and direct report over the weekend. You may link with some people on both FacebookandLinkedIn. But even in these cases, the vast majority of the time there will be limits to how much the friendship can flourish. And context will continue to govern etiquette and expectations. You say and do different things when at a bar on a Saturday night than when in the office on a Wednesday afternoon, even if youre with the exact same friends.'

In my next post, we're going to focus on the relationships that help you thrive in aprofessionalcontext. In other words, this is about professional relationships, and those personal friendships that also function in a professional context."

(Photo:Flickr)'

Adapted from The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career. Join theLinkedIn groupon career strategy to continue the conversation.'

ARTICLE: WHY RELATIONSHIPS MATTER: I-TO-THE-WE'

Even if you realize the factthat you are in Permanent Beta, even if you develop a competitive advantage, even if you adapt your career plansto changing conditionseven if you do these things but do so aloneyoull fall short. World-class professionals build networks to help them navigate the world. No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if youre playing a solo game, youll always lose out to a team. Athletes need coaches and trainers, child prodigies need parents and teachers, directors need producers and actors, politicians need donors and strategists, scientists need lab partners and mentors. Penn needed Teller. Ben needed Jerry. Steve Jobs needed Steve Wozniak. Indeed, teamwork is eminently on display in the start-up world. Very few start-ups are started by only one person acting alone. Everyone in the entrepreneurial community agrees that assembling a talented team is as important as anything.'

Just as entrepreneurs are always recruiting and building a team of stunning people, you want to always be investing in your professional network to grow the start-up that is your career. Quite simply, if you want to accelerate your career, you need the help and support of others. Of course, unlike company founders, you arent hiring a fleet of employees who report to you, nor do you report to a board of directors. What you are doing--what you should be doing--is establishing a diverse team of allies and advisors with whom you grow over time.'

Relationships matter to your career no matter the organization or level of seniority because every job boils down to interacting with people. In fact, the word company is derived from the Latin cum and pane which means breaking bread together.Yes, even if youre a solo software coder, youll still have to work with other people at some point, if you want to create a product people will actually use. Amazon, Boeing, UNICEF, and Whole Foodsto pick a handful of companies--are very different organizations, but they are all, ultimately, people organizations. People develop the technologies, write the mission statements, and stand behind the corporate logos and abstractions.'

People are the source of key resources, opportunities, information, and the like. For example, my long-term friendship with Peter Thiel, which started in college, is what connected me with PayPal. Without the relationship, Peter never would have called me with the life changing opportunity. Likewise, without the alliance, I wouldnt have referred Sean Parker and Mark Zuckerberg to Peter during Facebooks initial financing. In alliances, resources and assistance flow both ways.'

People also act as gatekeepers. Jeffrey Pfeffer, professor of organizational behavior at Stanford, has marshaled evidence that shows that when it comes to getting promoted on your job, strong relationships and being on good terms with your boss can matter more than competence. This is not nefarious nepotism or politics (though sometimes its that). Theres a good explanation: a slightly-less-competent person who gets along with others and contributes on a team can be better for the company than somebody whos 100 percent competent but isnt a team player.'

Finally, relationships matter because the people you spend time with shape who you are and who you become. Behavior and beliefs are contagious: you easily catch the emotional state of your friends, imitate their actions, and absorb their values as your own.If your friends are the types of people who get stuff done, chances are youll be that way, too. The fastest way to change yourself is to hang out with people who are already the way you want to be.'

'

'

Despite the fact that nothing important in life is done alone, we still live in a hero-obsessed culture. If you survey the population on how a company of note like General Electric achieved its behemoth status, youll probably hear about Jack Welch, but not a peep about the team he built around him. And if you ask about the career of a person like Jack Welch, youll hear he got to the top of the totem pole because of things like hard work, intelligence, and creativity.'

Typically, all kinds of individual attributes pepper explanations of a persons success. Books that promise to improve your life are shelved under self-help. Seminars that promise to teach you how to be successful are considered personal development. Business schools rarely teach relationship-building skills. Its all about me, me, me, me. Why do we rarely talk about the friends, allies, and colleagues that make us who we are?'

In part its because the idea of a self-made man makes for a good story, and stories are how we process a messy, complex world. Good stories have a beginning, middle, and end; drama; clear causation; a hero and a villain.Its easier to tell stories that neglect the surrounding cast. Superman and His Ten Allies doesnt quite roll off the tongue as easily as Superman. Weve been telling and retelling stories like these for centuries. Benjamin Franklin himselfartfully constructed his Autobiography as dazzling lessons in self-making.Americans are particularly eager to embrace the self-made-man story because we are a country that has long celebrated the ideal of a guns-blazing John Wayne and the rugged individualism he stood for.'

But tidy narratives tend to oversimplify reality. In actuality, Franklins networks and relationships were a huge part of his life, and played a huge part in his success. Indeed, if you study the life of any notable person, youll find that the main character operates within a web of support. As tempting as it is to believe that we are the sole heroes of our own stories, we are enmeshed in cities, companies, fraternities, families, society at large--collections of people who shape us, help us, and yes, sometimes even hurt us. It is impossible to dissociate an individual from the environment of which he is a part. No story of achievement should ever be removed from its broader social context.'

The self-made man may be a myth but the old saw There is no I in team is wrong, too. There is an I in team. A team is made up of individuals with different strengths and abilities. Michael

Jordan needed his team, but no one would dispute that he was more crucial to the success of the Chicago Bulls than his teammates. And one bad apple on an otherwise top-notch team can spoil the whole bunch. Research showsthat a team in the business world will tend to perform at the level of the worst individual team member.Your individual talent and hard work may not be sufficient for success, but its absolutely necessary.'

The nuanced version of the story of success is that both the individual and team matter. I vs. We is a false choice. Its both. Your career success depends on both your individual capabilities and your networks ability to magnify them. Think of it as I to the superscript We. An individuals power is raised exponentially with the help of a team (a network). But just as zero to the one hundredth power is still zero, theres no team without the individual.'

The book Ben and I wrote this year (from which this post is adapted) is titled The Start-up of You. Really, the you in the title is both singular and plural.'

(Photo: Flickr.)'

ARTICLE: 5 KEYS TO A STRONG CAREER PLAN'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

In my earlier posts I've written about how to establish a competitive advantagein the career marketplace and how to do flexible career planningvia Plan A, Plan B, and Plan Z. Here, I want to recap five key considerations you should keep in mind when you are crafting any sort of career plan."

'

Career plans should leverage your assets, set you in direction of your aspirations, and account for the market realities. The problem is, as we learned in the previous post, these three puzzle pieces are always changing, and are often not fully known. The best you can do is articulate educated hypotheses about each. I believe I am skilled at X, I believe I want to do Y, I believe the market needs Z. All plans contain these sorts of assumptions; good ones make them explicit so that you can track them over time. Essentially, you want to make explicit the things that need to be true for your plan to work. These hypotheses should lead you to specific actions. Companies often have broad missions like maximizing shareholder value, but as Jack Welch has said, maximizing shareholder value "is not a strategy that tells you what to do when you come to work every day."Similarly, you may have broad aspirations, like help interesting people do interesting things or design human ecosystems. But real planning means plotting the specific steps it will take to make those aspirations happen.'

'

Many people defer collecting full-time wages by spending twenty-three consecutive years in school. A high school dropout can make more money in the short run than the guy stuck studying geology. But in the long run, the logic goes, a person with a foundation of knowledge and skills will make more money and most likely live a more meaningful life. Its true. And theres a similar belief in start-ups: technology companies focus on learning over profitability in the early years to maximize revenue in the later years.'

Unfortunately, for far too many, focused learning ends at college graduation. They read about stocks and bonds instead of books that improve their mind. They compare their cash salary to their peers instead of comparing lessons learned. They invest in the stock market and neglect investing in themselves. They focus, in short, on hard assets instead of soft assets. This is a mistake. Were not suggesting you be a starving, unshaven graduate student forever; you do need to earn money and build economic assets. But as much as you can, prioritize plans that offer the best chance at learning about yourself and the world. Not only will you make more money in the long run, but your career journey will be more fulfilling. Ask yourself, Which plan will grow my soft assets the fastest? Even simpler: Which plan offers the most learning potential?'

'

Entrepreneurs penetrate the fog of the unknown by testing their hypotheses through trial and error. Any entrepreneur (and any expert on cognition / learning) will tell you that practical knowledge is best developed by doing, not just thinking or planning. In the early days of LinkedIn, the plan was to have members invite their trusted connections by email---an invitation mechanism would fuel membership growth. But it turned out the best way to enable viral spread was actually to enable members to upload their address books and see who else was on the service already. Learned by doing.'

For careers, too, you dont know what the best plan is until you try. I wouldnt have known that academia wasnt the path for me if I hadnt enrolled in a graduate program. When I moved to the business world, I mistakenly thought my competitive advantage was being able to hold complexity in my head and master abstractions. Only when I started working, I discovered my real advantage in the internet industry was the ability to think both about individual psychology and social dynamics at massive scale.'

Learn by doing. Not sure if you can break into the pharmaceutical industry? Spend six months interning at Pfizer making connections and see what happens. Curious whether marketing or product development is a better fit than what you currently do? If you work in a company where those functions exist, offer to help out for free. Whatever the situation, actions, not plans, generate lessons that help you test your hypotheses against reality. Actions help you discover where you want to go and how to get there.'

'

Occasional missteps are to be expected when you take an experimental approach to career planning. Its the error part of trial and error. But these errors neednt be permanent. Good Plan As can be stopped or reversed or morphed into a Plan B. A good Plan A minimizes the cost of failure. Dont bet the farm. Iterate bit by bit, learn experience by experience. Start with a trial period. Keep your day job.'

'

Planning and adapting means thinking carefully about your future. Lunging at the first well-paid and/or high-status job you come upon may offer immediate gratification, but it wont get you any closer to building a meaningful career. A goal that can be achieved in a single step is probably not very meaningful or ambitious. The business professor Clayton Christensen once told graduating students at Harvard Business School, If you study the root causes of business disasters, over and over youll find [a] predisposition toward endeavors that offer immediate gratification. At the same time, though, dont do the opposite and think ahead too far in the future. Again, you will change, the world will change, the competition will change.'

The best thing to do is to think and plan two steps ahead. If youd like to be promoted from analyst to associate, it may mean a first step of building a relationship with a key partner, or taking a night course to pick up advanced financial management skills before taking that step of marching into the bosss office and asking for that promotion. Sometimes the first step toward a goal is rather simple. A question people sometimes ask us is, Whats the best way to get into Silicon Valley start-ups? Well, there are various ways, but the first step is this: move here!'

If youre unsure what your first, or even your second step should be, pick a first step with high option value, meaning that it could lead to a broad range of options. Management consulting is a classic example of a career move that maximizes optionality because the skills and experiences of consulting can be helpful in and applied toward many other next steps, even if youre not sure what those steps are yet. A good Plan A is one that offers flexibility to pivot to a range of possible Plan s; similarly, a good first step generates a large number of possible follow-on second steps."

Adapted from my book co-authored with Ben CasnochatitledThe Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career.'

(Photo: Flickr)'

ARTICLE: FLEXIBLY PERSISTENT CAREER PLANNING (IT'S NOT ABOUT THE COLOR OF YOUR PARACHUTE)"

In my last postI discussed the three puzzle pieces that comprise your competitive advantage as a professional.More than 2,000 of you commented, shared, and tweeted your responses. Today, I'm going to show how to take the next step -- how to incorporate your competitive advantage into a "flexibly persistent" career planning framework.'

The best-selling career book of all time goes by the whimsical nameWhat Color Is Your Parachute?But when it comes to charting a career plan, thats the wrong question. What you should be asking yourself is whether your parachute can keep you aloft in changing conditions.The unfortunate truth is that in todays career landscape, your parachute--no matter its color--may be punctured full of holes. And if it isnt that way already, it could get that way at any time.'

In his first chapter, Parachuteauthor Richard Bolles writes, It is important, before you enter the job hunt, to decide exactly what you are looking for--whether you call it your passion, or your purpose in life, or your mission...Passion first, job-hunt later.After four decades in print, this is still the accepted wisdom today. You see similar advice all over. Habit number two of Stephen CoveysSeven Habits of Highly Effective Peopleis, Begin with the end in mind: you should produce a personal mission statement that puts your goals in focus. InThe Purpose-Driven Life, Rick Warren advances the idea that each of us has a God-given purpose for being on this planet.'

The primary message of these books (of which there are more than 50 million copies in circulation) and countless others is to listen to your heart and follow your passion. Find your true north by filling out worksheets or engaging in deep, thoughtful introspection. Once youve got a mission in mind, these books urge, youre supposed to develop a long-term plan for fulfilling it. Youre supposed to craft detailed, specific goals. Youre urged to figure out who you are and where you want to be in ten years, and then work backward to develop a roadmap for getting there.'

This philosophy has some serious strengths. Its important to have worthy aspirations. If you are passionate about something, youll have fun, stay committed, and achieve more. Its also right to invest for the long term: to find out whether youre good at something and whether you like it, you need to stick with it for a meaningful amount of time.'

But while these strengths may have made them the right philosophies in past decades, today there are somehugeproblems with this approach to career planning. First, it presumes a static world, and as we saw in my earlier post, the career landscape isnt what it used to be.Deciding where you want to be in ten years and then formulating a plan for getting there might work if our environments were unchanging. It might work if getting from point A to point B in your career were like crossing a lake in a boat on a calm summers day. But youre not in a calm lake. Youre in a chaotic ocean. Conventional career planning can work under conditions of relative stability, but in times of uncertainty and rapid change, it is severely limiting, if not dangerous. You will change. The environment around you will change. Your allies and competitors will change.'

Second, this philosophy presumes that fixed, accurate self-knowledge can be easily attained. In fact, lofty questions about identity and moral purpose, along with deceptively simple ones like "What am I passionate about? take time to work out, and the answers frequently change. Its unwise, no matter your stage of life, to try to pinpoint a single dream around which your existence revolves.'

Third, as we learned in my post on competitive advantage, just because your heart comes alive at a calling doesnt mean someone will pay you to do it. If you cant find someone who wants to employ you to pursue your dream job, or if you cant financially sustain yourselfthat is, earn a salary that allows you to live the lifestyle you prefer while doing itthen trying to turn your passion into a career doesnt really get you very far.'

So which is it? Should you follow a plan or stay flexible? Should you listen to your heart or listen to the market? The answer isboth. Theyre false choices--the same false choices entrepreneurs are frequently dealt. Entrepreneurs are told they must be really persistent in fulfilling their vision, but also be ready to change their business based on market feedback. They are told to do a business theyre passionate about, but also to adapt to customer needs.'

The successful ones do both. They are flexibly persistent: they start companies that are true to their values and vision, yet they remain flexible enough to adapt. They are obsessed with customer feedback, yet they also know when not to listen to their customers. They draw up light plans with the intent of developing true competitive advantage in the marketplace, but theyre also nimble enough to stray from those plans when appropriate.'

Sure, Bill Clinton decided on politics at age sixteen, and set his sights on the presidency almost as young. But most of us zig and zag our way through life. Tony Blair spent a year trying to make a go of it as a rock music promoter before entering politics. Jerry Springer was mayor of Cincinnati before attaining daytime television fame. Andrea Bocelli practiced law before he became a world-famous singer. Winning careers, like winning start-ups, are in permanent beta: always a work in progress.'

Its important to understand, though, that while entrepreneurial people are always evolving, the choices theyre making are disciplined not random. There is realplanninggoing on, even if there are no firmplans. We call this kind of disciplined, adaptive planning ABZ Planning, and its what well cover in the balance of the post.'

ABZ planning is the antidote to the what color is your parachute approach to career planning. It is an adaptive approach to planning that promotes trial and error. It allows you to aggressively pursue upside and mitigate against possible downside risks. ABZ planning isnt something you do once early in your career. Its a process as important for someone in their forties or fifties as for a newly minted college grad. There is no beginning, middle, or end to a career journey; no matter how old you are or at what stage, you will always be planning and adapting.'

So what doA,B, andZrefer to exactly?'

Plan Ais your current plan, your current job, your current thesis about how you stand out in the marketplace.'

My original career Plan A was to pursue academia because I thought it would be the best way to have impact on the world by spreading ideas about what made a good society. As I studied at Oxford, I learned much about how people come together, interact in groups and relate to society. But I also learned that career success in academia too often meant producing specialized writings that only 50 or so people ever read.'

Plan Bis what you pivot to when you recognize that a new opportunity has more potential than the one you are working on. Sometimes you change to Plan B because A is not working, which is what most think when they hear Plan B. But sometimes Aisworking, yet Plan B appears to have more potential. Regardless of the reason for shifting, the best Plan Bs are different but related to what you are doing now; this way you can apply the lessons youve learned to date to the new plan.'

In my career, my realizations about academia led me to shift to a Plan B and find a career path that had broader impact. My Plan B was to build new software. Success in the software industry also meant impactbut on a much broader scale than academia. In some cases, it meant building a product that improved the lives ofmillionsof peopleevery day. To pursue this alternative route, I first focused on building relevant skills and connections by working in the online divisions of Apple and Fujitsu. Second, I connected with people who could cofound a company of my own. Then, when I started my first company, I recruited as many smart advisors and participants as I could in order to learn and adjust quickly. And, in terms of company formulation, since my first company SocialNet was unsuccessful, both PayPal (founding team) and LinkedIn (co-founder) were my own shifts to new Plan Bs.'

Keep in mind that you should rarely write down a specific Plan B, but you should always be aware of your parameters of motion as you are executing your Plan A. You should be thinking about the adjacent possible. Your transferable skills. Other opportunities on the horizon.'

Plan Zis the worst-case plan. First, identify how to measure when youre tracking towards a worst-case scenario. Second, its the plan that tells you what to do should that happen. Maybe when your credit card debt bloats to a certain amount you cash out your 401k or get a job at Starbucks. The certainty of a Plan Z backstop is what allows you to take on uncertainty and risk in your career. When I started my first company, Socialnet, my parents offered me a room in their house in the event things didnt work out. Living there and finding another job was my Plan Z. It gave me the confidence to throw myself into the business knowing that if it all went to hell, I wouldnt end up on the street. You want to be able to survive failure in order to play again.'

Some text in this post adapted from my recent book with Ben Casnocha, The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career.'

ARTICLE: THE 3 PUZZLE PIECES THAT SHAPE YOUR CAREER PATH'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

'

A billboard that sat along the 101 Highway in the Bay Area in 2009 put it bluntly: 1,000,000 people overseas can do your job. What makes you so special?While one million might be an exaggeration, whats not an exaggeration is that other people can and want to have your dream job. For anything desirable, theres competition: the arm of an attractive man or woman, admission to a good college, a ticket to a championship game, and every solid professional opportunity.'

In the career marketplace, you are selling your brainpower, your skills, your energy. And you are doing so in the face of massive competition. Possible employers, partners, investors, and other people with power choose between you and someone who looks like you. When a desirable opportunity arises, many people with similar job titles and educational backgrounds will be considered. When sifting through applications for almost any job, employers and hiring managers are quickly overcome by the sameness.Its a blur.'

If you want to chart a course that differentiates you from other professionals in the marketplace the first step is being able to complete the sentence, "A company hires me over other professionals because..." How are you first, only, faster, better, or cheaper than other people who want to do what youre doing in the world? What are you offering thats hard to come by? What are you offering thats both rare and valuable?'

As Ben Casnochaand I talk about in our bookThe Start-Up of You, you dont need to be better or faster or cheaper than everyone.In life, there are multiple gold medals. If you try to be the best at everything and better than everyone (that is, if you believe success means ascending one global, mega leaderboard), youll be the best at nothing and better than no one. Instead, compete in local contestslocal not just in terms of geography but also in terms of industry segment and skill set. In other words, dont try to be the greatest marketing executive in the world; try to be the greatest marketing executive of small-to-midsize companies that compete in the health-care industry. Don't just try to be the highest-paid hospitality operations person in the world; try to be a top-notch hospitality operations person in a way thats aligned with your values so that you can sustain your work over the long run."

Competitive advantage underpins all career strategy. It helps answer the classic question, "What should I be doing with my life?"It helps you decide which opportunities to pursue. It guides you in how you should be investing in yourself. Because all of these things change, assessing and evaluating your competitive advantage is a lifelong process, not something you do once.'

'

Your competitive advantage is formed by the interplay of three different, ever-changing forces: your assets, your aspirations/values, and the market realities, i.e., the supply and demand for what you as a professional have to offer the marketplace. The best life direction has you pursuing worthy aspirations, using your assets, while navigating the market realities.'

Assets are what you have right now. Before dreaming about the future or making plans, you need to articulate what you already have going for you.'

You have two types of career assets to keep track of: soft and hard. Soft assets are things you cant trade directly for money. Theyre the intangible contributors to career success: the knowledge and information in your brain; professional connections and the trust youve built up with them; skills youve mastered; your reputation and personal brand; your strengths (things that come easily to you).'

Hard assets are what youd typically list on a balance sheet: the cash in your wallet; the stocks you own; physical possessions like your desk and laptop. These matter because when you have an economic cushion, you can more aggressively make moves that entail downside financial risk. For example, you could take six months off to learn the Ruby programming language with no pay, or shift to pursue a lower-paying, but more stimulating, job opportunity. During a career transition, someone who can go six to twelve months without earning money has different options--indeed, a meaningful advantage--over someone who cant go more than a month or two without a paycheck.'

Soft assets are more difficult to tally than cash in a bank account, but assuming your basic economic needs are taken care of, soft assets are ultimately more important. Dominating a professional project at work has little do with how much dough youve socked away in a savings account; what matters are skills, connections, experiences. Because soft assets may be abstract, theres a tendency for people to underestimate them when pondering career strategy. People list impressive-sounding-yet-vague statements like I have two years of experience working at a marketing firm . . . instead of specifying, explicitly and clearly, what they are able to do because of those two years of experience. One of the best ways to remember how rich you are in intangible wealth--that is, the value of your soft assets--is to go to a networking event and ask people about their professional problems or needs. Youll be surprised how many times you have a helpful idea, know somebody relevant, or think to yourself, I could solve that pretty easily. Often its when you come in contact with challenges other people find hard but you find easy that you know youre in possession of a valuable soft asset.'

Usually, however, single assets in isolation dont have much value. A competitive edge emerges when you combine different skills, experiences, and connections. For example, Joi Ito, a friend and head of the MIT Media Lab, was born in Japan but raised in Michigan. In his mid-twenties he moved back to Japan and set up one of the first commercial Internet service providers there. He also kept developing connections in the United States, investing in Silicon Valley start-ups like Flickr and Twitter, establishing the Japanese subsidiary for the early American blogging company Six Apart, and more recently helping to establish LinkedIn Japan. Is Joi the only person with start-up experience who does angel investing in the Valley? No. Is he the only person with roots in both the United States and Japan? No. But combining these transpacific, bilingual, tech-industry assets gives him a competitive advantage over other investors and entrepreneurs.'

Aspirations and values are the second consideration. Aspirations include your deepest wishes, ideas, goals, and vision of the future, regardless of the state of the external world or your existing asset mix. This piece of the puzzle includes your core values, or whats important to you in life, be it knowledge, autonomy, money, integrity, power, and so on. You may not be able to achieve all your aspirations or build a life that incorporates all your values. And they will certainly change over time. But you should at least orient yourself in the direction of a pole star, even if it changes.'

Aspirations and values are equally important pieces of your career competitive advantage quite simply because when youre doing work you care about, you are able to do it longer and better. The person passionate about what he or she is doing will outwork and outlast the guy motivated solely by making money. It can be easy to forget this when heading the start-up of you. In an effort to scrappily improve on who you are today you can lose track of who you aspire to be in the future. For example, if youre currently an analyst at Morgan Stanley, the savviest way to leverage your existing assets may be to angle for a promotion within the firm. If the banking industry is in a slump, the savviest way to attend to the market realities may be to develop skills in a different but related industry, like accounting. But would these moves reflect what you really care about?'

That said, and contrary to what many best-selling authors and motivational gurus would have you believe, there is not a true self deep within that you can uncover via introspection and that will point you in the right direction.Yes, your aspirations shape what you do. But your aspirations are themselves shaped by your actions and experiences. You remake yourself as you grow and as the world changes. Your identity doesnt get found. It emerges.'

The realities of the world you live in is the final piece of the puzzle. Your skills, experiences, and other soft assets--no matter how special you think they are--wont give you an edge unless they meet the needs of a paying market. If Joi were bilingual in an obscure African dialect as opposed to the language of the worlds third-largest economy (Japan), it wouldnt contribute to a compelling advantage. And keep in mind that the "market" is not an abstract thing. It consists of the people who make decisions that affect you and whose needs you must serve: your boss, your coworkers, your clients, your direct reports, and others. How badly do they need what you have to offer, and if they need it, do you offer value thats better than the competition?'

Its often said that entrepreneurs are dreamers. True. But good entrepreneurs are also firmly grounded in whats available and possible right now. Specifically, entrepreneurs spend vast amounts of energy trying to figure out what customers will pay for. Because ultimately, the success of all businesses depends on customers willing to sign on the line that is dotted. In turn, the success of all professionals--the start-up of you--depends on employers and clients and partners choosing to buy your time. It doesnt matter how hard youve worked or how passionate you are about an aspiration: If someone wont pay you for your services in the career marketplace, it's going to be a very hard slog. You arent entitled to anything."

Studying the market realities doesnt have to be a limiting, negative exercise. There are always industries, places, people, and companies with momentum. Put yourself in a position to ride these waves. The Chinese economy, the politician Cory Booker, environmentally-friendly consumer products: each is a big wave. Being in a position to ride them--making the market realities work for you as opposed to against you--is key to achieving breakout professional success.'

In my next post, I'll describe how to fit these three pieces together to build a career that's fulfilling and that also develops a real competitive advantage. Before I do, please share in the comments section: How do you conceive of your competitive advantage as a professional?"

Some text adapted from my book with Ben Casnocha:The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career(Crown Business, 2012).'

(Photo: Horia Varlan, Flickr)'

ARTICLE: THE CAREER ESCALATOR IS JAMMED AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT'

Centuries of immigrants have risked everything to come to America with the belief that if they worked hard, they would enjoy a better life than their parents had.Since the countrys birth, each generation of Americans has generally made more money, been better educated, and enjoyed a higher standard of living than the generation that came before it. This expectation of lockstep increases in prosperity had become part of the American Dream.'

For the last sixty or so years, the job market for educated workers worked like an escalator.After graduating from college, you landed an entry-level job at the bottom of the escalator at an IBM or a GE or a Goldman Sachs. There you were groomed and mentored, receiving training and professional development from your employer. As you gained experience, you were whisked up the organizational hierarchy, clearing room for the ambitious young graduates who followed to fill the same entry-level positions. So long as you played nice, you moved steadily up the escalator, and each step brought with it more power, income, and job security. Eventually, around age sixty-five, you stepped off the escalator, allowing those middle-ranked employees to fill the same senior positions you just vacated. You, meanwhile, coasted into a comfortable retirement financed by a company pension and government-funded Social Security.'

People didnt assume all of this necessarily happened automatically. But there was a sense that if you were basically competent, put forth a good effort, and werent unlucky, the strong winds at your back would eventually shoot you to the top.'

For the most part this was a justified expectation.'

But now that escalator is jammed at every level (for reasons Ill explain in a future post). Many young people, even the most highly educated, are stuck at the bottom, underemployed, or jobless, as Ronald Brownsteinnoted in theAtlantic.At the same time, men and women in their sixties and seventies, with empty pensions and a government safety net that lookslike Swiss cheese, are staying in or rejoining the workforce in record numbers.At best, this keeps middle-aged workers stuck in promotionless limbo; at worst, it squeezes them out in order to make room for more senior talent. Today, its hard for the young to get on the escalator, its hard for the middle-aged to ascend, and its hard for anyone over sixty to get off. Rather than advancing in smooth procession, everyone is stepping on everybody else, Brownstein says.'

Whats replaced the career escalator? Theres no single metaphor that universally describes the 21st century career journey. For those who lack globally competitive skills (and yet who are simultaneously overqualified for low-skill labor), the current environment feels like slogging through a tar pit. For people with the relevant skills, the journey is like a vast ocean voyage: unpredictable waves, multiple routes to arrive at a destination,the need to keep investing in your vessel lest it capsize, the allies who form an armada around you to cross perilous straits. A recentFast Companycover story called the winners of the post-escalator job market Generation Flux, a reference to their ability to acquire new skills, adapt to change, and reinvent themselves.'

Whatever you call the current climate, the point is that the old premises of the career escalator have given way to new realities, and with new realities come new rules. The new rules are ones entrepreneurs master and that you must, toono matter your industry or job title.'

In the weeks ahead, Ill elaborate on each of the below ideas (inspired by the book The Start-Up of You). If you learn and implement them, they will help you adapt to the future, invest in yourself, and transform your career. Look forward to continuing the conversation!'

'

'

Old: Ready, Aim, FireRetire'

New: Almost-Ready, Aim, Fire, Aim, Fire, Aim, Fire'

'

Old: Be Loyal to Your Employer and Theyll Be Loyal to You'

New: The Employer-Employee Pact is Over; Extend Loyalty to Your Network'

'

Old: Network Your Way to the Top'

New: Build a Network of Allies and Looser Connections'

'

Old: Its Not What You Know, Its Who You Know'

New: The What-You-Know Comes From the Who-You-Know'

'

Old: Search for Jobs When Youre Unemployed'

New: Continually Search for and GenerateBreakout Opportunities'

'

Old: Risk is Bad,MinimizeRisk'

New: Risk is Unavoidable; Proactively Take Intelligent Risk'