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Assignment: Event #1

Course: MGT 709, Fall 2025

Instructor: Leith Martin

Institution: The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Event: Startup Week Las Vegas, September 17, 2025

Sections:

Fueling the Future: Deep Tech & the NSF Regional Innovation Engine Opportunity

The Path to Profitability: How Operational Excellence Fuels Funding and Sustainable Growth

*Fueling the Future: Deep Tech & the NSF Regional Innovation Engine Opportunity*

I thought that it was interesting that Rich Sloan developed the idea, product, and company that would eventually become WAVR Technologies while he was associated with The University of Nevada, Las Vegas. At first, I thought that this was while he was a student at UNLV, but he clarified that he was actually hired or selected by the university to serve as entrepreneur in residence.

It was mentioned that the initial funding came from a number of government grants, and this is in part due to the technology risks involved in funding a business like WAVR Technologies at a very early stage. Investors will usually avoid a business that has technology risks associated with it.

There appears to be three similar sounding risk concepts related to technology: Technology Risk, Technological Risk, and Technical Risk. Price Waterhouse Cooper provides a definition of Technology risks that seems somewhat circular: “Technology risk can be described as the many risks associated with an organization’s technology” (Horton & McNichol 2024) but later on in the document there is a mention of “Emerging Tech Risk” that seems more pertinent to the type of risk associated with a company like WAVR Technologies. “Emerging Tech Risk” is related to the vulnerabilities, the lack of standards, and the uncertain outcomes that may result from emerging tech, but also the risk of failing to adopt new technologies (Horton & McNichol 2024).

Unprocessed Textual Data: company name waver last year college of engineer. Free tree frogs building 10000 gallon yields. Water. Funding from futures engine direct to UNLV catalyst engine competition. Roseman campus. Zero labs. Million revenue first year.  
  
Priorities for utility water needs. Private foundations. Challenges priorities unique. Technologies utilized pilot funds support solutions that are from local start ups. Water business is slow and risk averse. Secort is sector is actually asking for well defined milestones and sector needs. Customer service failures able to support that project.  
Federal grants available. Deep tech. Private sector not tech risk. Private. Sbir sba funding. Doe . Multiple phases disable analysis. Prototype and. National science foundation. High likely hood of usefulness SBIR . Research is commercially viable. Deep tech. 1 stem students commercializing. 2. Over time culture changes. 3. Maybe start some companies.  
  
Icore exits. Load balancing Milestones. Deep tech. Must guild of is echo chamber hype. Reality when customers begin to value. Paid transactions validate. Companies why does the company need to be built here. Ecosystem supporters why project satisfy those to answers.

Start up venture. Findable deals in the ecosystem. Good deals always find money. Eco system lots of money. Number of fundable deals.  
Battleborn growth escalator. Money is federal. Ssbc small state business credit. Fund named 1864. Deep tech research at UNLV.1  
Trains angel conference accredited investors into angel investors. Angel conference 1864 is a seed fund. Angel does Nevada deals only.

Unicorn yield. Top 5. Sloan. Becoming ian lp. Founders. Investors want to invest in deals. Founders have targeted. Invest in your deals. Find what they invest in. If no one is investing. Look in the mirror. Gatekeepers. They are looking to invest.  
  
Richard Sloan waver student. Unlv platform. Stepup startup Alejandro. Job posting. Rebel venture fund very small. Grants. NSF. National. Rpe. Foia. Arpa.e.

Notes:  
  
fractional CFO quantify svb . Dry powder. Dried. Up . Priorities changed afterward. For us shift from growth at all costs to profitability.  
  
Contribution margin. . From comparison of gross margin breakdown. . Unit economics. Unit economics .  
  
Metrics.  
  
Profitability hack.  
  
Pricing.  
  
Profitability mindset.  
  
Pricing raise until 20 percent say no. Unit economics.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Learn about defining operational excellence in the context of profitability, building a profitability roadmap, operational excellence as a fundraising magnet, and case studies on profitable startups and their funding success. Having helped founders raise over $40 million, Shondra understands the evolving demands of today's investment landscape. Investors are prioritizing business fundamentals, with a clear path to profitability being a top criterion.

References

Sloan, Rich. *Speaker Profile for Rich Sloan: Chief Executive Officer, WAVR Technologies.* Startup Week Las Vegas. Whova.com. Accessed on September 21, 2025

Horton, Michelle and McNichol, Elizabeth. *Technology risk: So pervasive, it’s hard to see*. Price Waterhouse Cooper. 2024. Accessed on September 21, 2025. https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/cybersecurity-risk-regulatory/library/assets/technology-risk.pdf

Hannover Re. Emerging Risks Insights: Technological Risks