



Stanford eCorner

Luck is Hard Work and Persistence

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January 13, 2010

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2343/Luck-is-Hard-Work-and-Persistence>

"It wasn't luck, we were just doing things right," asserts Scribd founder Trip Adler. In this clip, Adler explains that luck can come to any entrepreneur who works hard and remains persistent in trying to reach his or her goal.



Transcript

So Trip, you've had sort of this lucky star over you since you started this. Are there specific lucky moments that stand out as, "Boy, if that hadn't happen, we wouldn't have been able to get this traction. If that hadn't happen, we wouldn't be able to hire these people. If that didn't happen..." Yeah. At the time, it felt like, we just kept getting lucky. I feel like we're just the luckiest founders ever. But I think in retrospect, it wasn't really luck. We were just doing things right. So, I think the fact that we figured out how to do it right early on, I would say was lucky. That makes sense.

So, I think that the fact that we get so much traction and actually have all this traffic and all this interest within a year of starting to work on this kind of stuff was lucky. But if we hadn't had that luck it would figured it out eventually if we just kept trying. But how did it interrupt you? I'm a huge believer that you make your own luck. So, how did you, as someone who knows a little bit about the space. How did you get so much traction so early on. I don't know that that's luck. That was something that so many people who start Web 2.0 companies tried desperately to build that traffic. What was it that you did that made that happen? Well, we did just a good job building national product and branding it and promoting it. We're really aggressive in promoting it on blogs and link filter sites like Del.icio.us and those sites. So, it was really about promotion that made it take off quickly.

But I think that anyone can create that kind of traction. It's just that when people start Web 2.0 companies and fail, it's usually that they do it as a side project for six months. It doesn't work out and they quit. If you work on it full time for five years, if you're a smart person, you're actually working hard, I'm pretty sure you will get success. Even some of the founders I know from Y Combinator who three years ago, it looked like they had no idea what they're doing. They look like complete failures. Most of them have quit and gone and got a jobs but the ones who stuck with it, they're starting to get traction and they're all raising money. So, it's really just a matter of learning. Yeah it's persistence but you need to keep learning along that way.