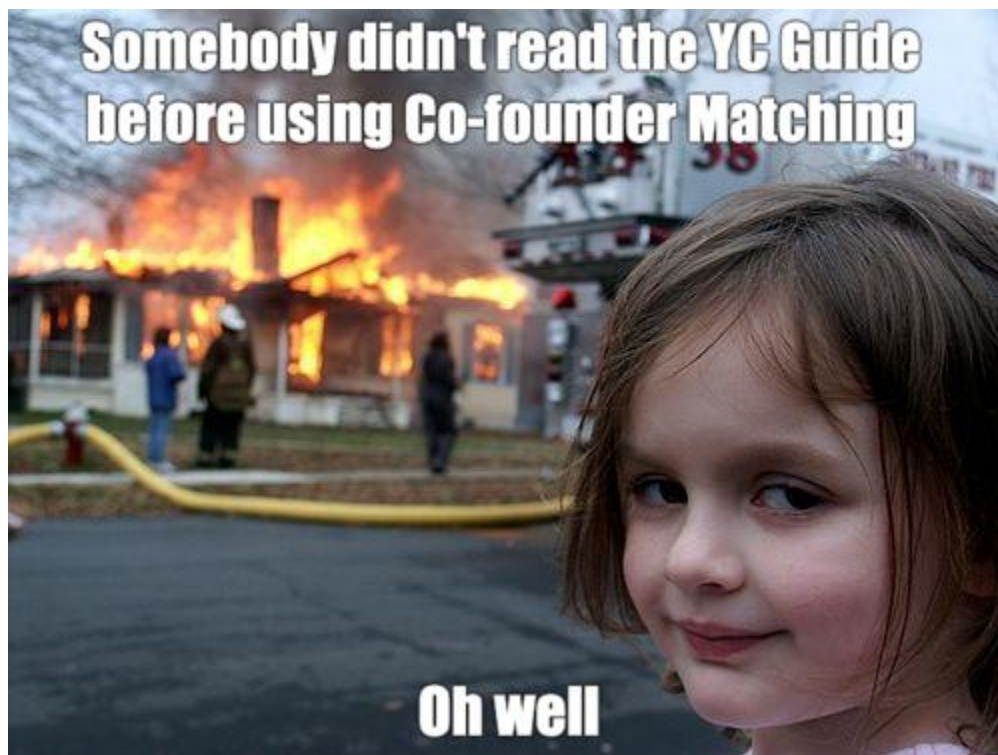# Y Combinator

The Y Combinator Guide to Co-founder Matching

Welcome to Co-founder Matching

We wrote this guide to accompany YC's [co-founder matching site](#) after seeing that even the smartest founders needed some non-obvious advice to navigate the tricky waters of co-founder matching.

This guide was written by YC Group Partners and the people who built the co-founder matching site, and draws on our learnings from seeing thousands of successful and unsuccessful co-founder relationships over YC's 17 years.

Please note that all the advice in this guide is confidential and is only for people who have approved profiles on co-founder matching.

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What's the story behind co-founder matching?

Y Combinator created co-founder matching and [launched](#) it in July 2021.

We created co-founder matching because we believe it will achieve one of YC's main goals of causing there to be more startups in the world. We know there are many great founders who would start a successful company if they had the right person to do it with.

While you can start a company as a solo founder, it's definitely harder. Only 4% of YC's top 100 companies are started by solo founders. We believe we can help founders be more successful by connecting them with excellent potential co-founders.

How's it going?

It's honestly surpassed our expectations. YC has already invested in over 50 companies whose founders met via co-founder matching.

What are some examples of successful companies that met via co-founder matching?

Here are two examples of companies YC funded that met via co-founder matching.

Sequin

Sequin (YC S21) was one of the first companies to come out of co-founder matching. Vrinda Gupta had left her job after launching credit cards like the Chase Sapphire Reserve at Visa to work on a product to help women build credit. She spent a year working as a solo founder, and, in that time, raised a pre-seed and built an MVP. She knew she needed a technical co-founder who was mission driven, had fintech expertise, and was in it for the long haul.

Sequin (YC S21) co-founders, Vrinda Gupta and Mark Thomas.

That person was Mark Thomas. He had ten years of engineering experience at Paypal, cared deeply about gender equity, and spent six years as CTO of family-oriented startups. They had an instant connection and arranged to meet in person soon after. Vrinda recalls, "We met the day after we matched, and the day after, and then the day after that."

Together, they went through YC's batch in the summer of 2021 and raised $5.7M.

Kiwi Biosciences

Kiwi Biosciences (YC S21) has a similar story. Anjie Liu started the company to solve her own pains with irritable bowel syndrome. She had a founding scientist to tackle R&D, but wanted a co-founder to help her build a consumer brand and commercialize the product.

Anjie Liu and David Hachuel, co-founders of Kiwi Biosciences (YC S21).

When Anjie saw David Hachuel's profile on YC co-founder matching, she knew that he was "exactly what [she] was looking for." David had previously sold a startup in the same space, and was immediately interested in her idea.

They took a very structured approach to co-founder matching. Both founders answered all 50 questions posed in First Round's co-founder questionnaire. They found deep alignment on "all the important things" (conflict resolution, vision for culture, etc.). When their month-long trial ended and it came time to say go or no-go, the decision was easy.

Anjie and David worked remotely for four months and finally met in person after getting into YC. They went through YC and raised $1.5M.

How to find a co-founder successfully

Tap your own network first

Even though we've built this whole website to help you find a co-founder, **the best place to look for a co-founder remains your own network.**

Often we find that people on co-founder matching have not thoroughly mined their own network to see who they know who they could start a company with. That should be the place you start.

People tend to avoid doing this because they don't want to spend their social currency - they're worried their friends might say no and it'll be awkward. But the fact is that starting a company is *embarking on a 10 year journey* with someone. If you're not willing to be a little vulnerable by asking your friends to join you, you're not serious enough about it yet.

It will always be easier to succeed starting a company with someone you've known for many years than someone you met recently on a website like co-founder matching. This website is intended only as a backup option, for people who really don't have anyone in their network to start a company with.

Really do the work here: go through your LinkedIn, think about everyone you went to school with or worked with. Ask your friends for intros.

Don't be shy about asking people who are working at some job if they might be interested in starting a company with you - many of them may be secretly ready to do something new.

If you have a great friend who would do a startup with you, but they just aren't interested in the idea you're working on right now, you should seriously consider changing your idea to work with them, rather than finding someone else to work on your idea. [The person is more important than the idea.](#)

YC Group Partner Harj Taggar made a [great video](#) on how to find a co-founder *through your own network* that goes into more detail on these approaches.

How to Find the Right Co-founder

How to Find the Right Co-Founder
by Harj Taggar

Y Startup School

Watch on YouTube
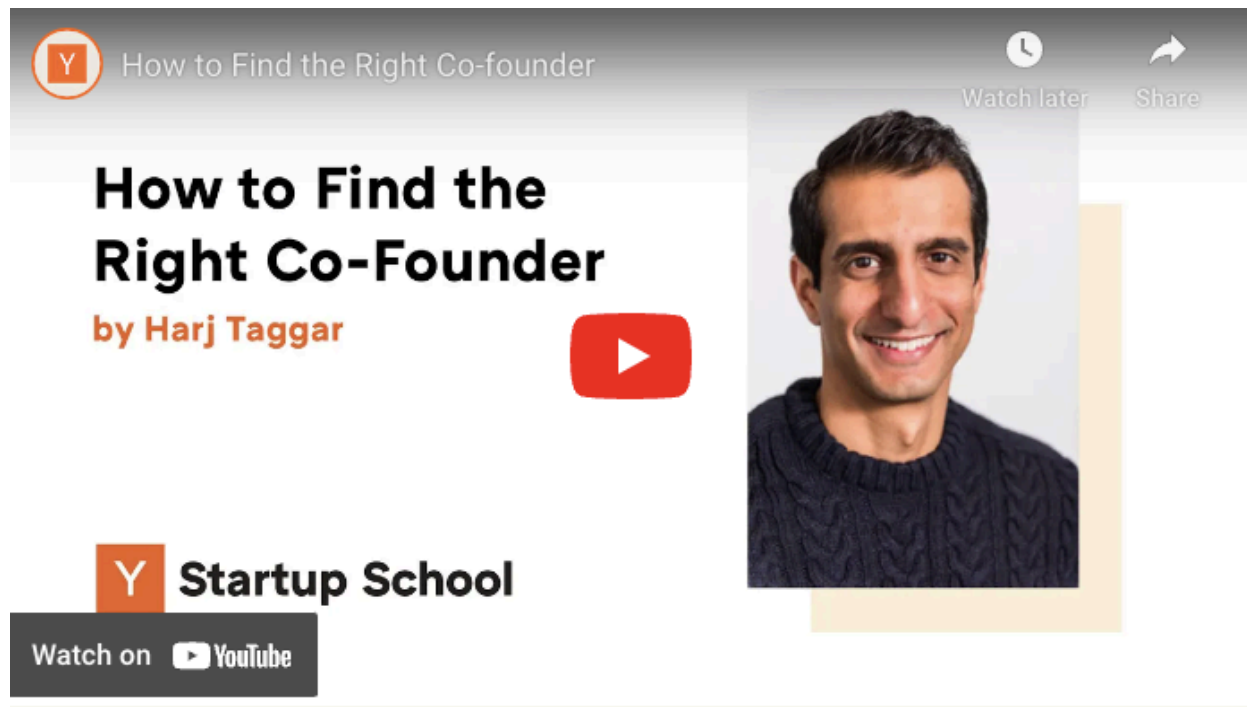
What to look for in a co-founder
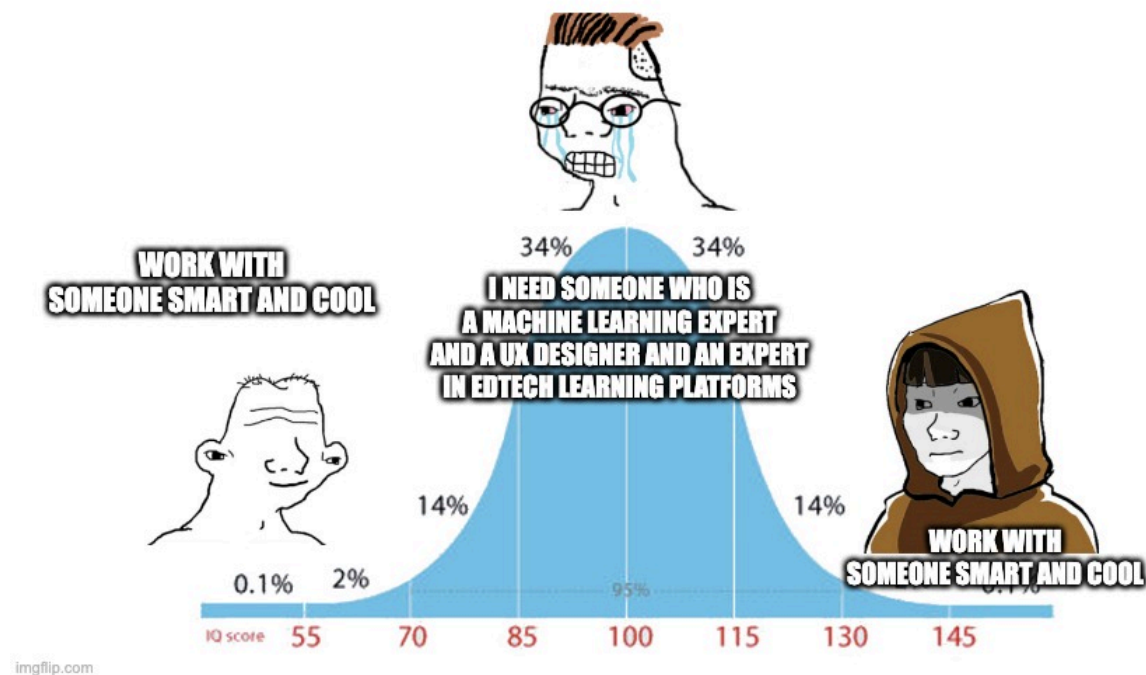
If your startup works, you are starting a 10 year relationship with someone. That's how long it takes to build a successful company.

So, don't over-optimize for someone with some skill you need right now. As a founder, your job will change every 6 months anyway. Instead, think about who you would want to work with for *many years*.

The most important thing to look for is someone who you get along well with and genuinely enjoy spending time with. Is this someone you would choose to spend time with outside of work? If not, it's almost certainly not the right person - most organic co-founders are friends before they are co-founders.

If your company works, you will spend more time with your co-founder than anyone else in your life!

So, it's a superpower when founders like spending time with each other. Many of YC's best founding teams seem "glued at the hip" to us, especially at the beginning.

So ask yourself, would I want to be friends with this person? If not, it's probably not a good match, regardless of how compatible your skills are.

The second most important thing to look for is an exceptional person: someone who is extremely smart and effective. Smart and effective, those are the two key qualities. Ask yourself, is this person going to start a successful company someday with or without me? Are they just as capable as I am?

You should have a very high bar for a co-founder. This is not a case where someone who is "good enough" will do. Successful startups are formed when the entire co-founding team is exceptional.

If you have hesitancy towards someone, listen to it. Don't force things forward with someone because you really want to start a startup. It's much better to cut things off and try again with someone else. Most teams who met successfully on co-founder matching knew right away that it was a good match. Successful co-founder matches are usually "obvious" to both people right at the start.

Looking for someone with "complementary skills" is likely following bad advice. The cliché advice for finding a co-founder is to find someone with "complementary skills". Despite being ubiquitous, this advice is bad, or at least oversimplified.

Contrary to this advice, many of YC's best founding teams have founders who are very similar. People who are similar often get along well and that turns out to be very important.

It *is* true that you need a technical founder to have a complete founding team. So if you're non-technical, you need to find someone technical to work with, and that is a version of someone with "complementary skills".

The reverse isn't true, though. If you're technical, you don't necessarily need to find a non-technical "business founder". Two technical founders can make an excellent founding team. Just because you're not great at sales doesn't mean you need to find someone who is; it might mean you should work on an idea that doesn't require being great at sales, or that you should learn how to do it.

Find people you have things in common with

Most of YC's successful co-founder matching teams connected on things outside of their startup.

Often they have shared interests or hobbies, or similar life experiences (i.e., they both grew up in the same city). Often they had friends in common. Often they had worked at the same or similar companies or gone to the same school.

In a surprisingly large number of cases, we've been able to reconnect people who actually had met before but didn't realize they were both interested in starting a company.

We built a feature called "[Founders you may know](#)" specifically to help you find those sorts of missed connections, or people who share aspects of your background.

It's worth thinking about this as an important factor when deciding whether to work with someone.

The person is more important than the idea

Too often we see founders who have locked themselves into an idea early and are struggling to find someone who wants to work on it.

If you're really struggling to find someone to work on your idea, it's a good sign that frankly, the idea might not be that great. And even if it is, there are plenty of other great ideas out there.

Rather than letting the idea hold you back, consider just finding someone great to work with, and working on their idea or coming up with an idea together. If you aren't committed to an idea, could you just work with a friend, and find an idea they want to work on, rather than trying to find someone on the co-founder matching website?

First-time founders tend to be wedded to ideas. Second-time and savvy founders realize that the idea is just the very beginning of a long journey and that it matters less than working with someone great.

What the co-founder journey looks like, step-by-step

This is the basic funnel.

1) Look through lots of profiles on co-founder matching. This is a lot of work but there's no shortcut to it.

2) Send messages to people you find compelling. Don't expect that people will message you; to get the most out of co-founder matching, you need to be proactive about messaging people.

3) When you match with someone, find a time to chat with them

4) Typically you'll have a few conversations with someone, getting to know them and discussing startup ideas and what you are each looking for.

5) If the first conversations seem promising, start a [work trial](#).

6) If things have gone well in the trial, it's time to incorporate the company and put a legal structure around your startup and equity agreement. This is also the right time to [apply to YC](#).

How long does it typically take to find the right person?

We now have some data on how long this takes, on average, by looking at the companies YC has funded who met on co-founder matching. The median time between when the founders joined the site and when they matched with the person they ultimately ended up working with is 100 days. Several took over 9 months to find the right person.

This is longer than a lot of people expect. Most of those founders first matched with many people who they didn't end up working with, and it's a good thing they stuck with it and kept meeting new people.

Advice for common scenarios

 You have an idea but aren't technical and you are looking for a technical founder to build it

First off, you should watch this video, by YC partners Michael and Dalton. It cuts through the most common misconceptions and mistakes made by people in this situation. It's probably the best video ever made for people who need a technical cofounder.

[How To Build A Tech Startup With No Technical Skills](#)

You should expect to send the messages. If you're in this situation, you can't expect technical cofounders to find you and express interest in working on your idea. You need to go to recruit them. Which means that you need to be the one going through profiles on cofounder matching and sending messages.

You'll probably need to send a lot of messages in order to be successful.

You probably need domain expertise. Most founders that are successful in this situation have specialized domain expertise and an idea that comes out of it. For example, Sequin makes a credit card for women. Sequin was started by Vrinda Gupta, who previously built the Chase Sapphire Reserve program at Visa. Because Vrinda brought highly valuable domain expertise on this idea, she was able to convince Mark Thomas, who she met on YC's co-founder matching, to be her technical co-founder.

If your idea is for some kind of generic consumer app, like a social networking site or something - honestly, we just have not seen it work for non-technical people to recruit a technical co-founder for that kind of idea.

You should make as much progress as you can on your own.
Even without a technical founder, you can probably:
- Talk to users and do detailed customer research
- Line up pilots / letters of intent / potential customers to prove that people want this
- Make mockups of the product using Figma or something similar
- Build and launch a no-code / low-code version of your idea. Can you build a [Wizard of Oz MVP?](#)

We don't recommend hiring a devshop or contractor to build a v1, though. You'll usually end up with a crappy product you throw away, and spend a lot of money and time doing it.

You should expect to split equity equally or close to equally.

Sometimes founders in this situation have a mindset that it's "my idea" and "my company". That mindset will prevent you from recruiting and working with a great technical founder. As Michael and Dalton described in the video above, great technical co-founders do not want to take orders and build whatever they tell you to.

To bring on a real co-founder, you need to adopt the mentality that this is "our company" and "our idea". That means you need to share not just equity, but decision making and ownership of the idea. It means recognizing that the idea is likely to change over time and wanting a co-founder who will have strong opinions and help you shape the idea and improve it.

If you aren't willing to do that, you are looking for an employee, not a co-founder. If you want an employee, you should go raise money from investors and hire an employee to build your idea. But note that not many billion dollar companies are started that way.

Have a high bar. Because attracting a great technical co-founder is hard, we sometimes see people settle for anyone who can build the product. But that's a mistake - you want to partner with someone who you respect as your intellectual equal and will grow into a CTO that runs the whole technical side of the company.

Don't hire a manager, though. Sometimes we see people looking for an "engineering leader" type who wants to build a team right away. That's typically the wrong approach. For virtually all successful YC companies, the co-founder/CTO built the initial product themselves. You do not need a co-founder with "management experience", you *do* need a co-founder who can and will write code.

You should explain your idea in your profile. Building a successful company is about much much more than the idea, so don't worry about protecting it. Going with a "super stealth idea" approach will just lead to a lower response rate.

If you've done everything right and no one is interested - maybe your idea isn't that great? We don't pretend to have all the answers, but we know some ideas are more likely to succeed than others. Check out this video on tarpit startup ideas.

You're a technical founder and don't have an idea yet

You're in a great position! Finding a great startup idea is hard, and joining someone who already has one is a great hack. You can expect to get lots of inbound interest from people who have ideas and are looking for technical co-founders, and you'll likely have many options to choose from.

Particularly if you're in this situation, it's important to learn to evaluate possible co-founders / ideas the same way investors do. Too often, we see technical founders drawn to an idea that sounds fun or interesting, rather than one that is actually a great business opportunity. We see this so much, we even made a video on it called *Should You Follow Your Passions?*

Here are key questions we'd recommend when evaluating someone who has an idea and is looking for a technical co-founder:

- Does this person have valuable domain experience in what they are doing? Example: someone who has worked in the freight brokerage industry for many years and wants to build tools for freight brokers.
- Can they clearly and convincingly describe their idea and why it's solving a real problem? Are they excellent communicators?
- Are they impressive people who have had an impressive career before this startup?
- Are there companies that have recently raised large venture rounds or become billion dollar companies with ideas that are related (not the same idea - but ideas in the same industry, the same business model applied to a different industry, etc)? This is a good sign that the idea is a venture-backable idea.
- Is this person executing already? Are they lining up customers, doing customer discovery calls, etc? Can they show you evidence that this is something people want?
- Do they want a true co-founder who they will build a partnership with, or do they really just want an employee to build their idea?

You'll get a lot of messages, so try to be decisive and go for an inbox 0 approach. This will reduce both the clutter in your inbox as well as the cognitive load of remembering which profiles you've seen before. Either view and respond to each invite right away, or set up a time every week to go through all your new invites and messages.

If you feel busy or overwhelmed working through existing matches and leads, don't be afraid to pause your profile via the settings page. When your profile is paused, you will still be able to

accept existing invites and message existing matches, but your profile will not be shown to new candidates.

You're a technical founder with an idea you're building yourself, and you're looking for a co-founder to help you get customers

To start with, you should watch this video:

▶ Do Technical Founders Need Business Co-Founders?

Do Technical Founders Need Business Co-Founders?

Really, you should watch the video. But to summarize the video as it applies it to his question, sometimes we see a technical founder who has an idea and is building the product themselves, and wants to find a cofounder to sell it for them.

This is probably not a great plan.

Often it's better for you to just learn how to do sales yourself, at least well enough to get the first customers onboard.

It's not necessary to have "sales experience" to do this. YC funds many technical founders who have never done sales before and they just learn to do it during the batch.

Doing sales yourself has a number of benefits. It lets you iterate on your pitch, product, and market segment in a tight feedback loop.

It's likely to be hard to find a business co-founder who has enough conviction around your idea and domain experience in the field to be good at selling it. If it's your idea, and you can't sell it, probably no one can.

Instead of a "sales cofounder", consider finding another technical cofounder to work with and learning to sell yourself.

You're looking for a co-founder to do design or product management

While having a co-founder who is great at design is a big asset, looking for one explicitly is probably unnecessary. If you're technical, it's probably better to just design it yourself and if necessary, hire a contract designer to help you make it look nicer.

How many founders?

YC's co-founder matching product is designed primarily to match two people and create two person teams.

Outside of co-founder matching, when three or four people who have known each other for a long time decide to start a company together, that can work fine. YC funds plenty of 3-4 person teams.

But in the case of co-founder matching, where you're starting a company with someone who you met only recently, having more than two people makes things a lot more complex. With three founders, you now have three pairwise relationships to navigate. If any of those don't work, the team is likely to break up.

We see too many people using co-founder matching to form shaky teams of 3-4 people who all just met. This is not a good idea! 2 people is the ideal team size in this context.

What if I already have a co-founder, but want another one?

If you've already got a co-founder who you've known for a while and are using co-founder matching to find a third team member, this may be a mistake. It only makes sense if there are critical skills you must have on the founding team that you are missing.

There are a very limited number of cases where it could make sense to be on co-founder matching if you already have a co-founder.

Good reasons to look for another co-founder

1) Neither of you is able to build the product, and you need a technical co-founder in order to actually build it.

2) Your co-founder is not committed - i.e., they are not actually willing to leave their job/school to start this company with you full-time. In this case, unfortunately, they're not a real co-founder, so you're going to need a real one.

Outside of these specific cases, it almost never makes sense to look for another co-founder. Here are some common *bad* reasons.

Bad reasons to look for another co-founder

1) You are both technical and think you need a "business founder" or a "sales and marketing founder" to get customers. This is not a good idea; one of you should just [learn how to do sales](#).

2) You don't have any ideas and are looking to meet someone with an idea. We don't recommend this, instead you should learn [how to get startup ideas](#).

3) You want a cofounder who is an expert at design or product management. See [this section.](#)

4) You just think your team will be stronger with more people / more skills on the founding team. It probably won't be. In practice, adding more people to an existing founding team, who don't know each other well, adds more risk and complexity than it is worth.

Work Trial

The only way to really know if you work well with someone is to actually work with them for a while. We call this a "work trial". You should do a work trial before committing to working with someone long-term.

How long should a work trial be? If you are working together with someone in-person, full-time (neither of you have jobs), we recommend 1-2 months.

If you are not in-person, or not full-time, the rate at which you get to know each other is slower, so you need to adjust proportionally. If you work with someone remotely, part-time for 6 months, you actually don't know them very well at all.

It's a good idea to decide beforehand what will happen to the ownership of your work at the end if you decide not to work together.

Questionnaire: 10 Questions to Discuss with a Potential Co-founder

We've had a lot of people ask for a set of questions to help figure out whether they're a good match with a potential co-founder.

We've compiled a list of the 10 questions that we think are the most important ones to answer.

The best time to go through these is after you've gotten to know someone, have found an idea you're both interested in working on, and are deciding if you're ready to commit to working together.

Here is a link to the Google doc where you can find and fill out the questions:

10 Questions to Discuss with a Potential Co-founder

Meet in person
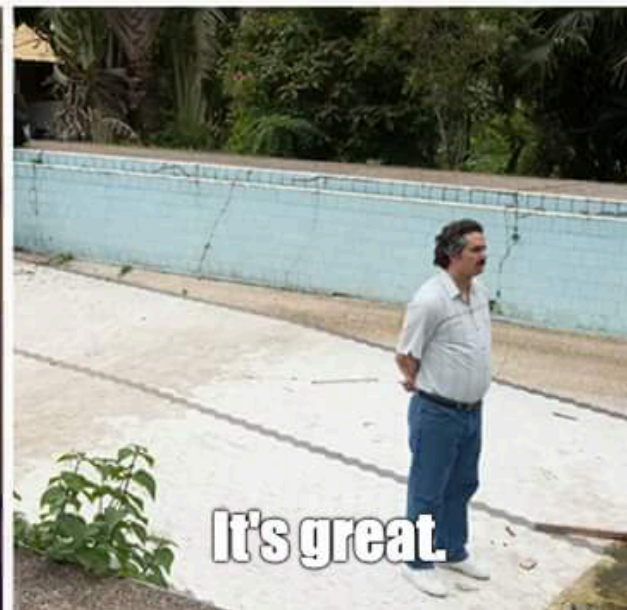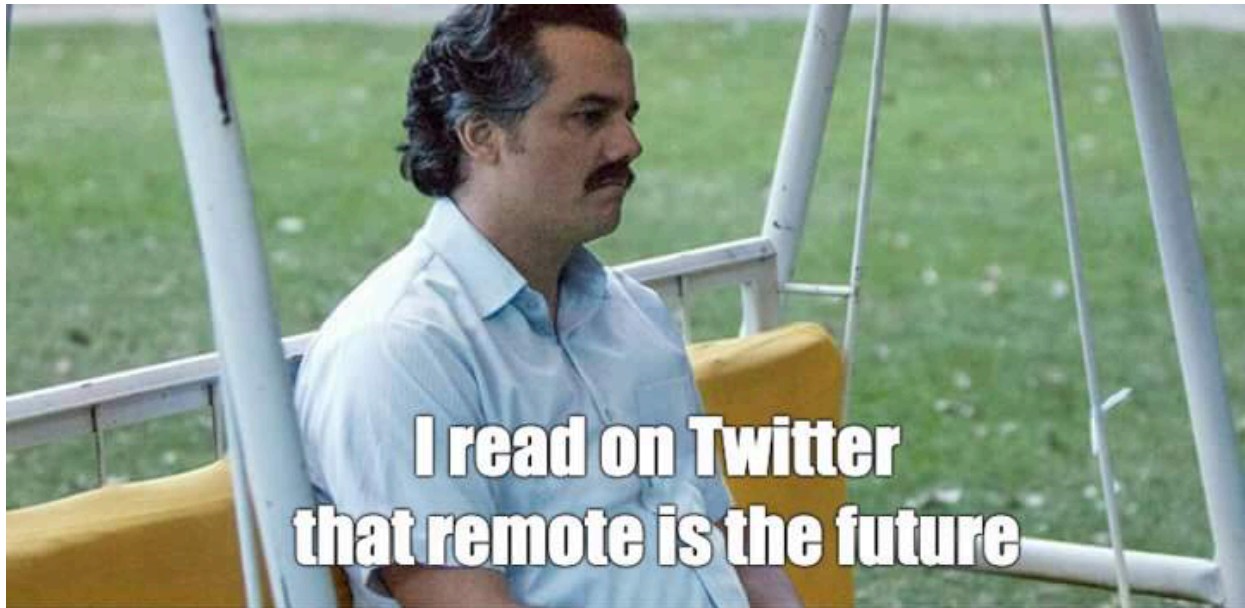
If you're in a major city, we strongly recommend looking for potential co-founders in your city first, before looking beyond that. Most of the co-founder matching teams we have invested in were living in the same city, so it was easy for them to get to know each other well.

The reason is simple: while remote work has become common since covid, starting a company with someone requires a far higher degree of trust and commitment than just hiring an employee.

Working together in person is the best way to build that kind of trust and figure out if someone is the right co-founder. That's why we recommend looking within your own city to start with.

If you've run out of great matches in your city and want to consider working with someone in a different city, here's some advice.

In our experience, you'll learn more about a person in one week of working together IRL than months working together on Zoom.

So, if you are considering working with someone in a different city, plan to get on a plane and visit them early in the relationship so you don't waste time with someone who doesn't end up working out.

Also, if you are living in different cities, you should expect that at least one of you will need to relocate if this is going to actually work out. If neither of you are willing to relocate to be in the same place, maybe it's not the right match.

Splitting equity

YC strongly recommends equal equity splits in almost all cases. This excellent video by Michael Seibel explains why.
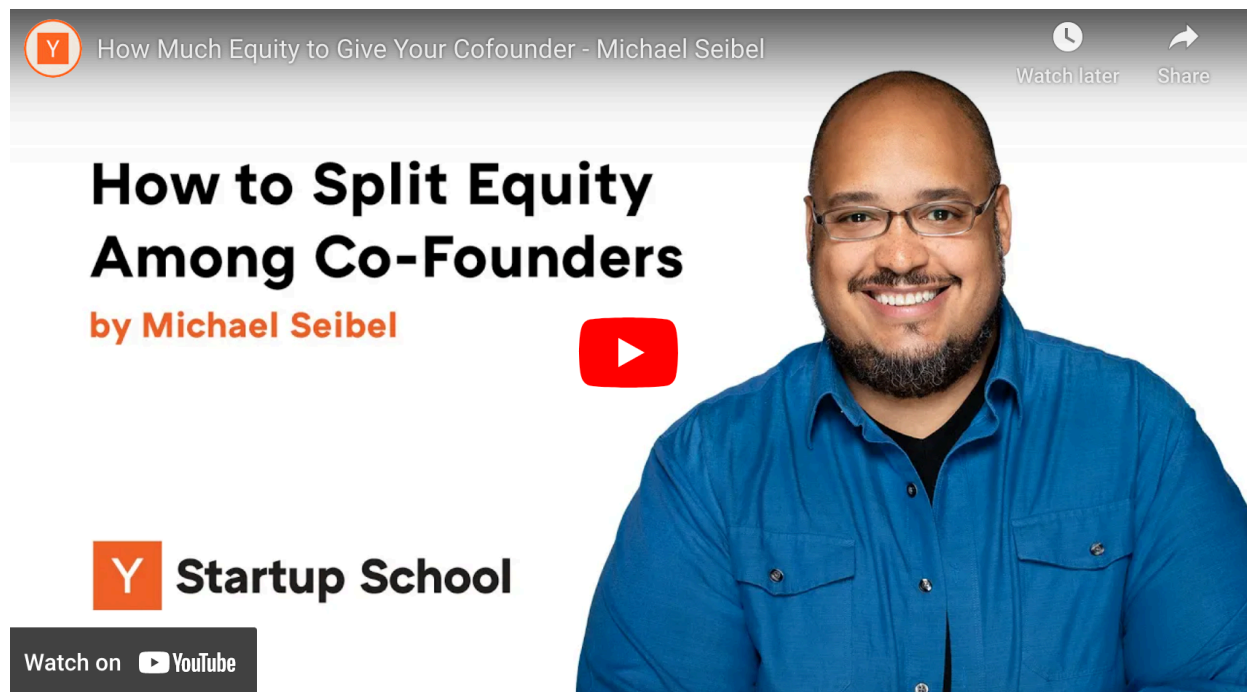
We see a ton of bad advice about this on the internet. In particular, there are some frameworks founders try to use to "calculate" an equity split based on contributions - "slicing pie" is the most well known. We don't think any of these frameworks are appropriate for a venture-backed startup. This is a case where the simple solution - to just split it equally - is probably the best one.
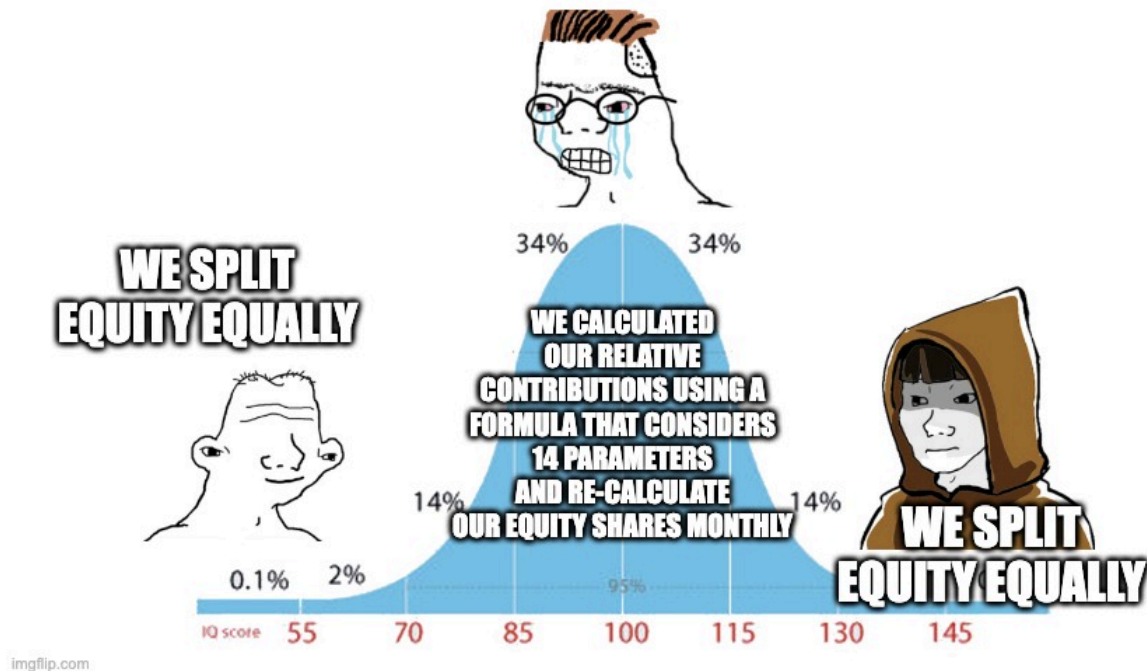
Some founders choose to do a 51/49 split or give one founder an extra share. Typically this is a signal as to which founder will stay with the company in the event that the team splits up, and perhaps who will make the final decision if the founders can't agree on an important question. This is a totally reasonable option and still considered by YC to be essentially an equal split.

You should note that YC considers the equity split between founders as an important factor when evaluating them for funding.

It's important to note that YC *defines* a co-founder as "10% equity as an absolute minimum". If you are using our website to find a co-founder, you should probably be planning to split equity equally, but you **must** be planning to give at least 10%. Otherwise you are not looking for a co-founder as per YC's definition and using the site would be misleading to others.

Whatever you decide to do with regards to your equity split, you should discuss and reach an agreement in one of your first conversations with someone. If you put it off because it's an uncomfortable topic, you're likely to spend a lot of time with someone only to realize that you can't reach an agreement on equity and have to start over.

Once you've reached an agreement, write it down - i.e., in an email. Finalizing actual legal paperwork may take a while, and you don't want there to be any uncertainty over such an important point. You should be very reluctant to change it once you've reached an agreement as trying to do so isn't likely to go well. The #1 reason for cofounder breakups in the most recent YC batch was co-founders trying to renegotiate a previously agreed equity split.

Once you actually incorporate, it's essential to set up vesting for your equity, because it allows the company to continue if the team splits up. The industry standard is four years with a one-year cliff, and we recommend just using that. Here are two good articles on founder vesting:
[Capbase: Vesting Schedules: best practices for startup founders](#)
[Clerky: Vesting](#)

Applying to YC

Our goal with co-founder matching is to help you find your co-founder and then fund your company in YC's program.

The right timing to apply to YC is typically after you've been working together closely for roughly 2-3 months and have really gotten to know each other well. Earlier than that, you just don't know for sure that your team is going to stick, and we want to talk to you after you're confident.

YC runs 4 batches every year, and it may be tempting to apply to a batch right after meeting someone. You certainly can, but don't be surprised if we don't fund you that batch; in most cases we will want to wait until your relationship is more solidified.

Tips for using YC's co-founder matching site

Tips for a good profile

Include a photo of yourself and ideally record a (short, 1-minute) video, especially if you're recruiting someone for your idea. A photo is a must - profiles without photos get way less engagement.

If you have an idea, sell us on the idea - explain why it's a really promising idea and why you are the right person to build it.

Don't worry that someone will copy your idea. One of the reasons people write bad profiles is they're scared to give away their idea, so they make it uselessly vague.

Don't be be afraid that giving your accomplishments is bragging - this is an appropriate forum to tell people what's impressive about you.

Give people a sense of your personality - talk about your life, hobbies, interests, and what you're like as a person.

You can preview how your co-founder matching profile looks to other candidates here: https://www.startupschool.org/cofounder-matching/my-profile.

Great example profiles

Here are three examples of great co-founder matching profiles. These are the actual, original profiles of users who found a co-founder successfully and got funded by YC.

Vrinda Gupta

San Francisco, CA, USA | Last seen over 1 year ago

Current YC Founder (S21) | 🔗 Copy shareable link

I'm **non-technical**, already **full-time** working on a startup, and **committed** to an idea.

I'm willing to do **Product**, **Design**, **Sales and marketing**, and **Operations**.

About Me

Intro

Hi, I'm Vrinda Gupta! I'm ex-Visa and building Sequin (Schwab & IDEO backed, Visa partner), credit tech to increase women's access to credit -- and ultimately, all of life's financial services. In search for a founding engineer to join me on this mission.

About Me:
-Currently in SF, raised in the Bay (Cupertino, CA) and born in India.
-Fintech nerd: I built credit cards at Visa (including the Chase Sapphire Reserve platform)
-Proud Berkeley Haas MBA ('20) and UCLA Bruin ('13) :bear:

I'm building Sequin, credit on a mission to address gender inequities (better access, credit building insights, and rewards). We're partnered with Visa, backed by IDEO & Schwab, and 92% of our angels are women.

The long term vision is to build an autonomous financial services platform to optimize women's finances across life stages.

My Background

Impressive accomplishment

I built and managed the Visa platform that powers the Chase Sapphire Reserve.

Education

- U.C. Berkeley, Haas School of Business, MBA, 2020.
- UCLA, B.A. Communications Studies, 2013.

Employment

- Business Designer, IDEO, 2018.
- Visa Inc, Product Manager, 2013-2018.

Curtis Fonger

Seattle, WA, USA | Age 37 | Last seen about 2 years ago

Current YC Founder (S21) | **MIT** | 🔗 Copy shareable link

I'm **technical**, already **full-time** working on a startup, and **committed** to an idea.

About Me

Intro

Hello! I'm Curtis, founder of Whaleform. I'm an MIT alum, have been a software developer since 2009, and have had the opportunity to work at Microsoft, Google, and my own prior startup (acquired by Google). I'm looking to meet potential co-founders, especially those who are passionate about the no code space.

Other

I have a family with two amazing kids. I enjoy singing in the Seattle Symphony Chorale. Fun fact: I met my wife at Mathcamp in high school.

My Background

Impressive accomplishment

Built Appetas, an instant website builder for SMBs. Acquired by Google in 2014.

Education

- MIT, M.Eng. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, 2009
- MIT, B.S. in Math and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, 2008

Employment

- 2020-present: Founder of Whaleform
- 2018-2020: Engineering manager, Google Podcasts and Audio News
- 2017-2018: Founder in a "startup" team in Area 120, Google's internal incubator. Successful exit to Google Podcasts and Audio News.
- 2014-2017: Software engineer in Google Maps.
- 2012-2014: Co-founder and CTO of Appetas (Techstars alumnus). Exited to Google.
- 2009-2012: Software engineer, Microsoft OneDrive (previously known as SkyDrive).

Whalesync

Anjie Liu

Boston, MA, USA | Last seen over 2 years ago

Current YC Founder (S21) | **Harvard** | 🔗 Copy shareable link

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I'm **non-technical**, already **full-time** working on a startup, and **committed** to an idea.

About Me

Intro

Hi! I'm developing a novel enzyme supplement for food intolerances and sensitivities associated with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), which has plagued most of my adult life. The mission is to bring relief to chronic gut pain and discomfort without relying on highly restrictive diets. The product will be for IBS what Lactaid is for lactose intolerance.

Aside from the venture, I enjoy studying languages and reading literature.

My Background

Impressive accomplishment

I achieved Legendary status in Duolingo (finished first in the Diamond League).

Education

- Harvard College, Physics and Comparative Literature (2017)

Employment

- Senior Analyst at The NorthBridge Group (February 2018-February 2021)

Kiwi Health, Inc.

Kiwi Health, Inc.

Kiwi Health offers unprecedented solutions to intractable gut issues. Our FODzyme brand is a line of novel enzyme supplements for FODMAPs, carbohydrates that trigger symptoms in many IBS patients.

Hard vs soft filters

Note that there are two types of filters you can apply to your co-founder matching profile.

If you select a hard filter, i.e. "I only want to match with co-founders who meet this criteria," then we will show you only profiles that match this filter, and also show your profile only to candidates who match your filter.

If you select a soft filter, i.e. "I prefer to match with co-founders who meet this criteria," we will prioritize showing you candidates who match this filter, but you may still see profiles that don't pass this filter.

Viewing candidates

When going through your list of potential candidates, you have the option to perform 3 actions:
1. Invite to connect - send a message to the candidate, and if they "accept" your invitation, you get matched through the system and are able to message each other.
2. Save to favorites - save their profile to a list you can come back to later.
3. Skip for now - this does nothing and shows you the next profile; this profile may be shown to you again later.

Messaging best practices

Here are a few examples of actual exchanges between founders on the platform who eventually committed as co-founders and got accepted into YC.

1: Customize your invite message

This is an example from ClearSpace, which was founded by Oliver and Royce and joined YC's Winter '23 batch.

Oliver made an impression on his future co-founder by downloading the app that Royce was already working on. His first message included this specific note to show his interest, as well as a good introduction about himself.

Oliver wrote, "Hey Royce, just downloaded ClearSpace, I love it. I'm a YC alum, fellow San Franciscan, and fellow athlete. Fighting the uphill battle against the obscene stickiness of big tech is a huge area of interest of mine. I'd love to chat ."

It must have worked because Royce responded, "Boom! Let's make something happen!"

2: Respond quickly

This is an example from Conduit, which was started by Saba and Conrad and joined YC's Winter '23 batch.

Saba messaged his future co-founder Conrad, 'Hi Conrad, I'd love to hear more about the problem Conduit is solving.'

It was a short, direct opening line. But notably, Conrad responded within 1 minute asking to chat later that day. They set up their first call within 15 minutes of sending their first message on CFM!

3: Meet in person (if possible)

This is an example from Truewind, which was started by Alex and Tennison, and joined YC's Winter '23 batch.

When Alex received an invite from Tennison, he saw that Tennison also lived in San Francisco and responded, "Hey Tennison, very cool products you worked on. Would be fun to chat. If you're in SF, want to meet up in-person? Zoom works too."

They found a coffee shop in between their apartments, and scheduled a time to meet to talk about the idea that would become Truewind that same week.

4: Use [calendly](#) to ensure you schedule a time to talk

We recommend using [Calendly](#) so you can include a link to your calendar and cut out the back-and-forth of scheduling. If you don't have a Calendly account, just sign up for one.

Behavior guidelines

The YC co-founder matching platform is for the explicit purpose of finding a true co-founder. Using it for any other purpose really damages the experience for everyone.

In particular please do not use the site to hire employees, find leads for your consulting service or dev shop, find potential customers, find potential investments, etc.

Also, please do not reach out to potential candidates on LinkedIn. Instead, use the built-in messaging system, which is designed to be double opt-in.

If you see someone breaking our behavior guidelines, please report their profile using the link in the bottom right corner of any candidate profile or email startupschool@ycombinator.com.