

Mark Leslie: Silicon Valley Go-to-Market Legend (Part 2)

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Mike Maples, Jr of FLOODGATE welcomes back go-to-market expert and Stanford Graduate School of Business lecturer Mark Leslie for the second of their two-part interview, this time focusing on the role and responsibilities of a CEO and a deep dive into Leslie's Compass, an essential set of heuristics for every startup founder. Leslie also discusses the value of founders focusing on a five-year plan for their startup, why it's challenging to make meaningful change inside a large company, and why every founder should understand the relationship between their sales and marketing departments.

Mark Leslie: First of all, I have a deep adult commitment. What makes a company successful is great strategy, not great execution. So execution without strategy, the train will run on time, it won't go any place, it won't circle. Great strategy allows you to transform the company, it allows you to do great things competitively, it allows you to think about where to from here and how we're going to get there.

Mike Maples Jr: Once again, that's the voice of Mark Leslie in the second part of our two-part interview. Let's pick up where we left off with him last time. This is Mike Maples Jr. of Floodgate and it's go time with Mark Leslie. Welcome to Starting Greatness, a podcast dedicated to ambitious founders who want to go from nothing to awesome super fast. When you're a startup founder, you have to channel your inner James Bond, your MacGyver, your Wonder Woman. I'm going to help you win by curating the lessons of the super performers, but before they were successful. So without further ado, ignition sequence start. Let's get started. In our last episode, I had the chance to catch up with Mark Leslie on a lot of things, including the notion of the sales learning curve. And I decided that there were too many lessons to learn to capture in a single episode of our format. So I hope you like this second part of our two-part discussion with Mark. Let's get to it.

All right, Mark Leslie, welcome to the podcast. Nice to be here again. Yeah. Well, thanks for showing up again. So you've done the CEO job many times now. And so I think it would be great to get your perspective on a vexingly simple question. And that is, what does a CEO do in your opinion? And what does a CEO not do in your opinion?

Mark: So I was a CEO for 21 years. It was a learning experience. Everybody comes to a CEO from a prior job that's in a functional area, having been finance or sales or engineering or whatever. And your instincts as a CEO, when you start out is to exercise the muscle that you have developed in that area, as well as in some other areas, which you're probably not competent to do. What I discovered over a long period of time is that the CEO actually doesn't do any of those things. I had a very interesting experience early in my career. I was CEO of a young company and we fired the CRO, in those days called the VP of Sales. And I said to my board member, I said, well, I'm going to go do that job until further notice. And he said, well, that's a great idea. He said, my question to you is while you're doing that, who's running the company? And I thought that was really good insight. So given that, so what does the CEO do? So he doesn't do sales, he doesn't do finance, he doesn't do engineering,

he doesn't do any of those things per se. Of course, he knows about all that and he of course coordinates all that.

First of all, this job of leadership I described from a CEO point of view, I described it as macro leadership and micro leadership. Macro leadership is talking to the whole company and the external world, evangelizing a vision, inspiring people about the company, being responsive to the needs of the community, internal and external, et cetera. Micro leadership is how do you forge an executive team that has internal trust and has agency to represent the company's interest in all cases. And that's actually a different challenge and one which I think is exceedingly important. And it's not micro management, right? There's... No, no, no. I call it micro leadership, meaning micro meaning in a small group rather than in the large world.

But I wrote this little article, what does the CEO actually do, actually being the operative word. And I sat down and I thought about it and I said, well, every day I wake up in the morning and I look at my calendar and I figure out where I have to be and when I have to be there and what I have to do to prepare for anything. I also look at my calendar for the week and think about that and I look at my calendar downstream and say, is there anything I have to do today or this week to prepare for something next week or the week after? So kind of some forward thinking. Every day as a CEO, I think about how are we going in the quarter because I committed the company to achieving certain objectives, both financial and non-financial. How are we doing on the year? Of course, we spent a lot of time managing the process along the way. But I think most importantly, every year, every day, I think about what we're going to be in five years from today.

First of all, **I have a deeply held conviction that what makes a company successful is great strategy, not great execution. So execution without strategy, the trains run on time, they don't go anywhere, they go in a circle. Great strategy allows you to transform your company.** It allows you to do great things competitively. It allows you to think about where to from here and how we're going to get there. And I think that is a thing, my experience is that that's what makes a difference. But in order to have strategy, you have to have vision. In order to have vision, you have to have a, it has to be there, there. There has to be something in the future. And I use five years as my timeframe to think, who are we going to be in five years? What does that look like? And for me, that becomes like a shining star, a North star in the future. And it's my belief that all those decisions I described along the way, all those activities I described along the way, are actually informed by this five-year vision.

So when I make a decision to spend time on one thing or another thing, one of the things I think about these days, even unconsciously is, does this move us closer to our five-year goal? When I make operational decisions, what are we going to develop in engineering? Does this move us closer to who we hope to be in five years from today? And so I think that's the great lesson that I walked away with it, that strategy trumps execution. Strategy relies on long-term vision. And that long-term vision, when you have it clear in your mind, and of course I evangelize in the company, that informs all of the decisions and activities along the way. And of course, every day you wake up, you are a free agent to go change that vision if you so desire. So you're not a slave to this thing, but it is a guiding light. And did you have a way to sort of prime yourself each day to do these types of things? Like did you set

aside a window of time where you kind of said, gather my thoughts about these different elements, gather my thoughts about five-year vision, how does this match with what I'm doing today? Yeah, so no routine, but I'll say that this idea of the future informing the present actually was part of me when I was 23 years old. And I decided that one day I wanted to go found and build a great company in the computer industry. And then every time I had a good job decision or do something, I always thought about that. And did I take job A or B or C? I didn't compare them to each other. I compared each one to long-term vision. Yeah, it's interesting.

We use a term, I don't know if we've ever talked about this before, but the difference between forecasting and backcasting. And so forecasting kind of assumes that the future is going to look similar to the present. And so by definition, forecasting projects forward from what's known on a straight path. Whereas like backcasting, you say by definition, I assume the future is going to be different than those living in the present would assume. And so I visualize different futures than would be forecasted that would be better for the company. And then I work backwards to connect the dots to bend the arc of the present into that better future of our design, right? Well, that goes together with the five-year vision.

The other part of this is that, so when you get to a company of scale, when you're in a few hundred million, all on up to larger numbers, your ability to change the outcome in the next 12 months is very, very small. You can make more profit by cutting costs, that's something you can do. You can cut your price to see if you can stimulate demand, that's what you can do. But you can't really change the profile of the year. We used to go in a year and we used to know what the sales productivity is, we used to know how many salespeople we had on board, we used to know what our engineering capacity was. And any change to that that we made during the year really didn't have an impact until the following year, not meaningful impact until the following year. Takes close to a year to get a salesman productive and probably six months to get an engineer productive. So part of that is that if you want to change the future, if you want a three-year difference in revenue from where you currently expect it to be, now is the time to make the changes to facilitate that. And if you don't do it today, when you get there, you're going to be forecasting, not backcasting. Right, right. Yeah, by the time you get to the point where you're forced to change course, it's too late, right? You haven't positioned the company for a long enough amount of time to bend the arc.

And my personal criticism of people who are great operating executives, quote unquote, great execution people is that they basically say, how do I make this wheel continue to turn at the same speed or greater, rather than saying, maybe I need a different wheel. As the person then who needs to step five years into the future and then have that in, because when you think about it, it's a great thought experiment for everything about who to recruit, what markets to be in, are we doing the right things? It has a way of focusing the mind. Did you find that you did need somebody who all they care about is making the trains run on time, right? That sort of was forecast centric. No, no, you need people in companies to do that because the trains have to run, it's not perfectly on time, relatively on time, things have to go off the tracks. But that is not a job of leadership, that's a job of operational excellence, which is part of the thing you aspire to do. It's an interesting thing. I teach at Stanford Business School, and students frequently come in and they get close to leaving and say, hey, I'm thinking about this job or that job, what should I do? And I never go through that, like,

well, what's the pluses and minuses that lead to that? I say, well, so what do you want to be when you grow up? Let's start there. Tell me, envision in your mind who you are 20 years from today and in what industry. And the more you can clarify that vision, it will inform which job you take. It doesn't matter about the money. That's a transient thing. The real thing is you want to accomplish your lifelong goals.

And let me just go back one second. This five-year vision I talked about in a company, not a personal vision. It's a vision that's created by the people in the company through a process that says, let's create a vision. Right? Yeah. And no, it's a good clarification. And so when you create a vision with your team, did you come up with a process for that? Right? Did you come up with a way to kind of tease out the best collaborative outcome? Yes. We had a point in time at Veritas early on that we said we're great at what we're doing, and then we got three, four years of runway, but we see the business flattening out after that. What are we going to do about it? That was the basis for doing. We spent most of a year, and what we did was we enlisted not by rank or by title or by function. We just said, who do we think are the smartest people in the company in terms of helping to solve this problem? And we created a task force, and we met once every two weeks, one month, two weeks a month. We had a little action items in between, and we worked out. And at the end of it, we came out with a strategy that we then executed over the next five years, and it was quite successful. So we had a process. I didn't have a book about it. I didn't have a rigorous plan, but we just see that the pants did this, and I liked the way it came out. All right.

Mike: So sales learning curve. I think a lot of people know what the sales learning curve is, but actually, I think that in many ways, Leslie's Compass is the underappreciated work between the two, because I think Leslie's Compass in some ways takes it a level down that I think is really is going to be helpful and valuable to people. Let's just talk about what are the first principles behind Leslie's Compass, and then what does that imply for price and market size and complexity and all kinds of things?

Mark: So the way I lay out this paper, as I say, the two, to start with the two extremes of products that are completely marketing driven and products that are completely sales driven. And if you characterize the completely market driven, marketing driven products, they're consumer products. And I use the example of Crest Toothpaste from Procter & Gamble. And I say low cost, simple to understand, very large market, inexpensive, I said low cost. I don't know, and there's like three or four more other things in there that categorize it. It's not about someone making a sales call on your house and sitting down with you with your toothbrush and explaining all the benefits of it. It's on the shelf, which is the sales function, the placement of it, one of the four P's. It's getting it onto the shelf so that when they advertise and tell you to buy it, you can find it. So that's completely marketing driven experience. On the other hand, I talk about the complete sales, pure sales experience, which is General Electric selling jet engines to airframe manufacturers. And in that case, you don't really see them on the shelves at Fry's, which used to be in existence. Yeah, but you're not going to buy it with Amazon one click from their site. And it's a long campaign and it's very engineering driven. It's very competitive. It's very complex. It's very expensive. There's a small number of customers, and it's kind of this long list of things that are the opposite of the ones that are in the marketing side.

So then when you kind of build the two ends, you can say that as you go from these characteristics to those characteristics, the marketing intensity goes down and the sales intensity goes up, which is where you get the crisscross curve. When you're Procter and Gamble, as you become something a little more sophisticated than Toothpaste, it moves down. It's a little tiny bit more sales and a little less marketing. It goes all the way down to the bottom where you get to this jet engine. It's a completely different business. And so then what I try to do then is to say to companies, where are you on the curve? Where are you on this chart? And to the extent that you have a complicated product that's expensive, but you want to sell it to the masses, it isn't going to work. And it's not going to be sales intensive. I mean, you shouldn't build a sales force. You should build one-click self-serve, low cost. But it informs you as to how you build your sales model.

Now, most companies come together with people who came from companies before and have a notion of whether it's marketing driven or sales driven, and they try to force fit that onto their new product. And what this says is you have to sit down and think it through all over again. And then as you get into the cloudy part, which is in the middle, then you start talking about things like channels and distribution and all the other elements that go to market that are included on the two end cases, which are both pure. Yeah. **So one of the things that I really like about this is this idea that some products are bought, some products are sold primarily.** So I like to say car insurance is bought, life insurance is sold. Well, car insurance is bought because of the regulations. Yeah. Like car insurance, the value proposition is I can't drive without it. So yeah, but I don't sit there when I buy car insurance. I'll go into search engine and say, I need car insurance to drive. So just give me one that's good enough, cheap enough. Let's go. Whereas like life insurance, somebody's got to explain to me what it's a, is it a term life policy? It is a. Yeah. Well, what's my exit opportunity? There's all this stuff, right? Yeah.

So I see a lot of startups where they came from Google. So they're like, why? We don't want to hire salespeople. We want to be like Google. We want to do algorithmic sales. And, and I'm like, you know, some products, you just can't do that no matter how much you desire that to be true. Some, some products are meant to be sold. Some are meant to be bought. And it's, you know, don't be in denial about what yours is. Yeah. And I think the important thing, and I think people, you know, the important thing is to have flexible thinking, to have, you know, thinking that allows you to envision things that are different from what you're experiencing. We all are a product of our experience, you know, I always say, you know, be careful when you hire it, particularly when you hire a sales executive, they are hammer looking for a nail. And to them, everything looks like a nail. And if you get someone who does, you know, high volume, you know, low intensity, that's what they're going to go build, whether it works or not. And if you get someone who is coming from the enterprise sales world, that's looking to build no matter what.

So you've got to decide what your, what your business is before you hire your CRO. You got to have a hypothesis. Yeah. And so, so let's just take each of the components, right? So with price, I've heard you say, you know, ask, is this a large or small economic decision for the buyer? Right? So that's the price part. Let's see, what are some of the others? Market size, what do you ask there? Yeah, well, I mean, everybody who does a pitch to VC says the market is X and you know, it's how many, how many, how many of them are there that you

have to touch. Now the market could be large in dollars and small in volume in terms of number of customers, if it's very high price and vice versa. So, so the question is how many of you have to touch? And you know, how intimate does that touch have to be, you know, relative to information and knowledge and experience and, and, and explaining things and stuff like that. Yeah. And what, one of the components I like about the market that I think is really subtle that you talk about is, you know, is it easier for them to find you or for you to find them? Right? So like if you're, if you're, if your product is bought, it's got to be easy for them to find you. If your product is sold, it's got to be easier for you to find them because they may not be shopping.

So, you know, Veritas in phase one of our lifetime was a, was a company that was selling to the systems OES. And you know, people would, would always in the company lobby for, you know, spending more money in marketing and spending more money in sales. Right. And I would always say to them, I said, look, we've got a hundred customers. That's it. That's our universe. We're not going to go to a show and set up a booth. We're going to go to a show, but what we're going to do is we're going to go around to their booths. I'm going to go find the right guy to talk to. And we're going to go talk to those people. We're not going to spend, you know, stupidly spend money on setting up a booth. We're the only people to care about it are a hundred people and we know where they are. Yeah. No Superbowl ads, no signs on highway 101. Right. So that was the extreme case, right. And that, you know, as I say, we're all a product of our experience. So part of my ability to draw that curve and to write the paper was my one of the experiences, the experience I just described. And then, and then you've also got sort of level of complexity and fit and finish, right? So maybe I should let you explain like level of complexity and fit and finish. How do you think about whether that's primarily marketing centric or sales centric?

Okay. So level of complexity, I'll, you know, just go back to my original example of the jet engine and toothpaste, right? That is infinitely complex, infinitely simple, right? Fit and finish is very interesting. The product that you build in the complex high end, you know, small market oftentimes is a little bit customized along the way and fit and finish is less important to the buyer in that world than it is, you know, in fit and finish, if you buy a tube of toothpaste from sort of vendor A and the tube leaks, you're not going to buy it ever again. So the fit and finish has to be perfect in that business, right? And the fit and finish as you get to more complicated, like, so I have a Tesla, right? And I also have a Mercedes. I can tell you the fit and finish on a Mercedes is way, way, way better, right? But I like my Tesla better. Yep. And I'm willing to say let's fit and finish because of the, because of the desirability of the overall product. So that's what I talk about in fit and finish. That's not a perfect example, but it gives you an example. Yeah, it's a good one though. And I suppose like even GE with jet engines, the customer may tolerate a not completely finished product because they think that it's going to help them design better jet plane if they make a few tweaks to the engine, if they incorporate it, their process in a certain way. Make a few tweaks to the, to the airframe. Right, exactly. And so now, now it's like, I'm, I'm willing to trade off a hundred percent fit and finish consumability for the ability to give my business competitive advantage.

So I'll give you an interesting thing. You know, it's a little off, off the topic over here, but I remember growing up that, you know, cars did not have a good fit and finish and they didn't

have a, they weren't durable. Cars life was considered to be three years. And then they started to deteriorate to the point where most people, you know, kind of sold them. It was the cycle of the car. And Japan invaded the market probably in the seventies, I would guess it would be the American car is like junk next to these things. And I remember, I remember someone telling me, telling me a story about selling to Japanese and to U S manufacturers, right? So they come in with this part and they put it on the table and the Japanese company, these guys would pick it up and they turn it and they do it and they twist it and they move some part of it and they keep looking at it and stuff like that. And when they went to the American automobile manufacturers, they put it on the table and said, how much does it cost? And it changed the world, right? So they, so, so that was it. So today the fit and finish, I think today's internal combustion engine automobile from, you know, general motors or whatever is actually a miracle of engineering. Incredible, incredible. But they used to be, you know, pile of junk, right? But, but part of what, what I think is really valuable about this framework is this notion of, you know, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the, the effects. So I think that the frame of Jerusalem on circuitry itself, I think, that people have actually, I, I've not used them, necessarily, in the kind of, in the world I'm buying them, but I think that the briefly pero Valdunai is really changing the way that p  zle doesn't have to work, and it's really Green Stream. Yeah, yes. And I'm wondering also on what model systems on the copper scale and it's accessible and clean and everything like that. Those guys don't work for Safeway, they work for Coca-Cola. And they come around there and they wanna make sure their product is in the right place at the right time.

In that world of consumer products, they have a thing called, do you know what end caps are? Sure, yep. So they'll go in and they'll buy end caps and they'll go tidy them up and put them in the right place and they have a list, there's this whole kind of thing. I remember when I was in college, I had a part-time job, I was working with the sales reps for Liggett and Myers, they were coming out with a new cigarette and my job was to stand out front and give out samples. But these guys would go in and look at what was in stock and say, you would need more of this and you gotta get rid of the competitors one and stuff like that, that was placed. That was their job is to go at it. These are very low level people, low level intellectually, low level, they didn't work hard, they were, whatever. And that is the sales function in that world is to make sure that the product is in the right place at the right time. Yeah, well, so just to make sure I get it right though, so that's sales serves marketing. And I guess that the, I remember when I was at business school, we would talk about the five P's and the four C's of marketing. Like if that's how your company, if that's the vibe of your company, maybe it's a sales serves marketing because like marketing is, it kind of walks a little bit taller in that relationship and they. Sure, so when they talk about price and place and positioning and stuff like that, well, those are very marketing driven concepts. Exactly, exactly. And what I was talking about was place, right? And in terms of how sales fits into that picture. Sales doesn't fit into the picture of price. It doesn't fit into the picture of positioning or anything like that in the marketing world. But their job is to go and make sure that it's where it's supposed to be, when it's supposed to be, it looks good.

Okay, and then now let's talk about marketing serves sales. So marketing serves sales. So in the world of these enterprise sales in our business and the B2B business, sales marketing is there to provide leads, to provide white papers, to provide sales enablement, to provide the stuff you put up for the show and stuff like that. But that doesn't turn the corner. What

matters is getting the salesman in front of the buyer and the right buyer, the right people in the buyer and then being able to get them to pay not only time, but attention, not just attention during the meeting, but attention to evaluate and understand the product and to put resources on it. And that's the sales job. And sales looks to marketing to feed them these functions and features that they need in order to go get these deals done. So marketing serves sales in that. And as you said, if you look at the vector of blame, you can figure out what kind of company it is. Yeah, and I learned a lot of really valuable lessons.

So I was in a B2B enterprise company when I was an entrepreneur and it was definitely marketing serves sales. And we did a couple of things that were kind of fascinating one time and unfortunately fascinating in a very reality sandwich kind of way. One time we did this thing called a sales weaponry review and we took an inside salesperson, we took an account exec, we took a marketing communications person and then we asked the inside salesperson, show me how you present the product. And they put up the slide deck that they use and it looked terrible. And marketing folks were like, well, that's not the deck that you're supposed to use. And it was like, no, just keep going, let him show the deck he uses, what he says. What's your elevator pitch? Here's my elevator pitch. That's not the elevator pitch that you're supposed to use. And then we went to the AE and said, what deck do you use? That's not the deck you're supposed to use and that's the old look and feel. It doesn't even match the new look and feel. And then the guy goes, and by the way, when are you gonna give me this data sheet I need? And we're like, well, we already have this data sheet. We sent it to the office. It turned out they were sitting in a box unopened. Totally. And so you start to realize, right, when marketing serve sales, it doesn't matter that you just did a program, right? What matters is what sales outcomes are facilitated by your efforts to revision sales. Yeah, so the most important measure that a sales organization puts on marketing is the quality of the leads. If you give me leads, then I can go get an appointment and go close a deal and I love you. And if you give me leads that I have to go sort through, you know, gotta go kiss a lot of frogs before I find a prince, then I say, this is bullshit. Why are you wasting my time? And that's kind of what we learned when marketing serves sales, the fundamental economic equation was high quality leads generated faster than our revenue growth forecast.

Because if- Now, it's an interesting observation since I wrote that paper, since we're on this part of the topic, which is that marketing has transformed. Marketing used to be very artistic and inspired and kind of one-off in a sense. And it was like about advertising and PR and all that other stuff. And today marketing is a very metrically driven business with really great tools. So I always tell people, you ought to get a marketing demand ninja, someone who really, really knows how, you know, get the right products in, get the right pipeline built, get the right pipeline, be able to look at every deal that we've done and track it back to its source and be able to say, to talk about the efficiency of the different sources and things of that nature. It's a really big, big step that we've made in this area. Yeah, I mean, we've gotten to a point now where some of the companies that I work with, it's almost like they can define the expected revenue value of any type of lead or any type of activity in the sales funnel. And that becomes, you know, to the extent that you have, again, going back to the crisscross chart, right? To the extent that you have a large number of smaller transactions, that becomes more and more important. To the extent that it's a small audience of prospects and they're large transactions, you know, that stuff's not gonna help you very

much. Like I said, we had a hundred customers, we knew their address, we knew their phone number, we knew who to talk to in those places. We didn't need any marketing in that business at all. And I guess, you know, we've alluded to it, but this idea that it should fit together as a whole, that it should fit together as much as possible, right?

Mike: I've seen you use the example of Gusto, right? It's a cheap product, they've got lots of customers, it's not very complex, it's, you know, fit and finish is high, it's B2C oriented and it's low touch. And it would be tempting to say, hey, this is a B2B product, let's think of it as, you know, marketing serve sales. But by understanding where each of those attributes fit on the Leslie's compass, it yields a different answer. Yeah, it's a marketing business is what it is. And, you know, sales is there, once you've done all that stuff and someone calls up with a question, you can close them on the phone, that's what sales does. It's a very low touch, you know, low impact business in that business. Yeah, but it looks like across the entire value delivery system of that product, it has to be built to be bought, right? Rather than built to be sold.

So we have a little family office here. When I got involved with Gusto, we were doing our payroll on Intuit. And I asked her, you know, we have two people here. I asked the financial person, I said, hey, why don't you look this over and let me know what you think. He looks it over and he switches products. I said, okay, I'm investing. Okay. Okay. He never spoke to anybody in the company, just try it. So what are, you know, there's a lot of talk these days about product led sales and product led growth. You know, you've got products like Slack, you've got products that are adopted by individuals that almost have a consumer angle to it, but then they spread with a network effect and have a kind of an over the top sales motion that occurs later. How does that affect your thinking about some of these topics? There's no reason you can't be both.

Mark: Yeah. Zoom, right? Zoom is a product that, you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, I said, huh, I like the free version, the 45 minutes is not long enough, I'm gonna go pay the money and have the real one. So I can make Zoom calls with everybody, right? So that low touch, you know, it's a viral, you know, kind of adoption. You get on someone else's Zoom and you say, this is a good product, et cetera, et cetera. Viral is great when you can, Zoom was a perfect example of that. But Zoom also has, you know, I'm also on the faculty at Stanford and there's a Stanford version of Zoom. There's a very, very sophisticated feature rich thing, which isn't gonna go be, you know, someone's gonna buy it off the shelf. This is something that's sold by a sales person. So there's a company. Now, look, we at Veritas, you know, by the time we got to be scale, we had five channels of distribution, enterprise sales, commercial sales. We had inside sales, we had distribution and we had self-serve. So you could do it all. It doesn't mean one doesn't eliminate the other. But when you get big enough, you basically say, which is what we said, it's like, I don't know how you wanna buy, but we'll be there to serve you in that method, in that channel, whatever that is. Yeah, cause over time, the goal is not just to go from zero to one and establish a market in the first place. Over time, the goal is to capture all the available demand in the market, no matter how the demand comes. And so I guess you start to get more hybrid in the approach. Correct.

Mike: So what should I have asked you about? I mean, I know we're kind of coming up on our time here. What should I have asked you about, Mark, that I haven't so far?

Mark: Yeah, I'll just add like one final thought. I love the fact that I've been in the technology industry since its infancy, actually. I joined the tech industry in 1966. Went to work for IBM. And one of the things that is rewarding is it has fascinated me every day. Every day I learn about something new and think about something new. And I've been very, very grateful for serendipitously falling backwards into this industry. I had no idea what I was doing when I was 20 years old, right? And these days I spend my time investing in frontier technology. And so in a sense, I'm carrying a lot of money and carrying the torch forward, right? I invest in the kind of the most exotic, not most exotic, but many exotic things that are the things of the future. And I'm trying that to be personally very rewarding to do that. I think I'm gonna, most of the places I invest, I'll probably lose the money I invested. Maybe if I get lucky in one or two of the places, I'll make a hundred times. And if that happens, I will have, you know, come out ahead overall. That's why I'm doing it. All right, well, cool. Mark, thanks so much for taking the time. I'm looking forward to what we could put together out of some of this and out of most of it, in fact. Okay, thanks. Thanks, bye. Thanks. Thanks for listening to the Starting Greatness podcast. If you've enjoyed this episode or you're new to the show, I hope you listened to our past interviews with legendary founders like Reid Hoffman, Mark Andreessen, the Instagram founders, and Keith Rabois. I'd love to have you subscribe wherever you get your podcasts so you don't miss an episode. And if you like the show, I'd be grateful if you leave us a review on Apple podcasts. You can also follow me on Twitter at M2JR and subscribe to our newsletter for exclusive content and events at greatness.substack.com. Until we catch up again, I hope you'll never let go of your inner power to do great things in whatever matters to you. Thank you for listening.