



AI-Era
Entrepreneurship:



Fast Launches,
Lasting Moats, and
Customer-First
Growth

August 20, 2025 | PODCAST TRANSCRIPT



Andy Sack: This is AI First with Adam and Andy, the show that takes you straight to the front lines of AI innovation and business. I'm Andy Sack and alongside my cohost, Adam Brotman, each episode we bring you candid conversation with business leaders transforming their businesses with AI. No fluff, just real talk and actionable use case and insights for you. So excited for today's episode. have fellow co-authors, Henrik Werdelin and Nicholas Thorne, authors of Me, My Customer, and AI. And we're going to dive into the world of entrepreneurship and AI, customer experience, and really excited to have Henrik and Nicholas welcome.

Henrik Werdelin: Thank you so much for having us.

Nicholas Thorne: Thank you.

Andy Sack: I expect in this episode to have, we definitely want to learn about both of you and as well as your book, but I think we're going to dive into the world of entrepreneurship and AI that we collectively see coming as a result of the transformation in the business world and some of the inevitable layoffs that are coming and the change to our economy. But before we get into that, let's start like Henrik and Nicholas, but why don't we just start with basic introductions to our audience. Henrik why don't you go first?

Henrik Werdelin: Well, thank you. I guess in the context of my work, I started my career at MTV Networks doing product development. So ran the product development team there for many years and then started doing a bunch of businesses. I was fortunate enough to move to New York in 2010 and help start a business that we sold to Facebook and then didn't really know what to do next. And so we set it up, what looks like an incubator, but it was more like a halfway house for entrepreneurs. Um, basically gathering a bunch of people that had started something and they didn't know what to do next. And a lot of us were asked when we had exited, do you want to work for a corporation? Do you want to work for a, do a startup again?

Do you want to go to a VC? I think most of us didn't have the answer. So over 15 years, Nicholas and I, um, worked with a lot of people like ourselves who had wanted to build stuff from scratch, but didn't really know kind of like how to do it. And so we became in many ways like students on making something out of nothing. And over the last 15 years, we built what we think is a pretty specific pedagogy of entrepreneurship and one that we think is relevant for how the world's gonna look with AI. And I guess as a process maybe worth answering, we build a bunch of larger businesses. I built a Bark that we took public in '21 to help build ROE, that is a \$7 billion market cap built managed by Q that we sold to WeWork for 250 million and a bunch of other things.

Andy Sack: And were you the co-founders of PreHype? Yeah. Okay, great. We have some connections there. Nicholas, how about you? What's your background? And Nicholas, it's worth noting for our audience, Nicholas is dialing in from Bhutan. So we're yet to have a guest from Bhutan and we've prepared the servers to handle the audience increase in Bhutan.

Nicholas Thorne: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They, they're very into AI here. I've learned, that's why I'm, why I'm here. Every, from the King, the King on down, everyone, everyone is, is very interested in AI. we can come back to Y Bhutan another time. Although I think everyone should look up the Gelufu mindfulness city and, realize that they're building a brand new country here. They've just decided to start a country, which is, for those of us who are into starting things from scratch is like, on the bucket list of things to try to start is extremely entrepreneurial. And I mean, like literally you have these conversations with people where they're talking about the hardware side of the organization, i.e., the buildings and the airport and the software side of the organization, i.e., the policies and the taxation framework.



Anyway, my background very quickly becomes a pre-hype background because I was working on Wall Street out of college and I just would tell everyone who would listen, I need an idea and I'm going to get out of here. And then I, happened to say that to just enough people that I ended up on Henrik's doorstep and we had a cup of coffee in Manhattan and the winter of 2009. And, he said, you know, well, if all you're waiting for is an idea, I got good news for you. I've got lots of ideas so we can get going tomorrow. And, I don't think we got going quite tomorrow, but pretty quickly thereafter, we started a business and in doing so I became the kind of prototype, entrepreneur in residence at, at pre-hype the, it was being conceived.

The business we happened to start first was, was not one that was going to be our life's work. I became very interested in like, how do you help entrepreneurs figure out what to start next in large part also, because I didn't feel I had done that perfectly. I felt like I had kind of focused on building something that kind of sounded cool, but I wasn't necessarily that passionate about the customer we were trying to serve. So yeah, we, did everything Henrik said, but in 2020, think just germane to this conversation. In 2020, a couple of things were happening. One is we were starting to get some liquidity in some of the positions that we had aggregated over time. So that was great. But also it gave us the opportunity to look back on the 10 years prior and try to think about what had worked and what hadn't.

And to Henrik's point, what was the pedagogy that had kind of developed organically? And a big part of that was focused around the notion of how do you help an entrepreneur start a business centered around their founder customer fit, centered around their unique or kind of intimate knowledge of a given group of customers. And what is the advantage that an entrepreneur can build around that kind of initial relationship? And so a lot of that thinking that went into that we feel as, as Henry said, quite relevant to AI, but it's certainly a much of which has informed the substance of me, my customer and AI as a book. So we started writing that actually in basically 2021. And here we are today with it coming out next week, but we feel it's more relevant than it was then and excited to be practicing it and thinking about it.

Andy Sack: And give our audience just a high level overview about sort of the origins of me, my customer and I, and what's it about.

Henrik Werdelin: Well, basically, it has three theses. First is that there's a new type of entrepreneur emerging. 60 % of Americans say they'd like to start something only 9 % does. And historically there been good reasons why it was difficult, you need technical experience, you needed capital. And so we think there's a change in the world around that. And second, there's a new type of company emerging. A lot of us have been talking about unicorns, but we like to talk about what we call Donkey-Corns which is basically a million dollar turnover business with two people or less. So we think that the neighborhood companies are going to come back, but not going to be angered in a physical location, but in a set of people, a peer group.

And thirdly, that in a world of AI, you need to figure out what your mode is. And when everybody can do everything, what will be left is what we call relationship capital, which basically you have three layers. It has depth, basically, how deeply can you connect with the customer so they feel seen? It's density, the community layer, how much can you build a business that's part of the fabric of the community you serve? And three, it's durability or the resilience layer. Basically, can you build a business where you're allowed not just to offer a solution to the first thing that people bought from you, but to several? So those three elements is basically the crux of what the book is about.

Andy Sack: Adam, you want to tee off with the question or should I keep running here?

Adam Brotman: No, I'm taking notes here on this. This is actually really interesting. mean, it's...



Andy Sack: Donkey-Corn I think you might need a different name than Donkey-Corn, but okay.

Henrik Werdelin: Well, the Donkey-Corn it grinds like a mule, but it parties like a unicorn. And then when you render it, when you render it in AI, it is just hilarious. So you might be right, but also we've had so many giggles on that.

Andy Sack: Ha ha! Yeah, it works for you, okay.

Adam Brotman: That's funny. You know, I love to explore. I mean, the risk of going deep, I'd be curious to get your opinion on this, because this is what you guys are getting at in your book, which is, you know, for an entrepreneur right now, there's, first of all, entrepreneurs can build all sorts of different kinds of companies, of course. You know, when you say, when you talk about entrepreneurs, are you talking about, like, generically speaking, like any kind of entrepreneur, or are you talking about entrepreneurs in technology or for AI companies. Can you tell us a little bit more about the target type of entrepreneur you're talking about?

Nicholas Thorne: Yeah, we use the term, if we were on brand, we would use the term everyday entrepreneur. And we use that to describe less the Silicon Valley technology archetype and more to Henrik's point of 60 % of Americans have had an idea for a business. And even we'll tell you they have the kind of resources and knowledge to be successful with it, but only 9 % of them do something about it. You we're talking more about the kind of mass market, if you will, of people who are interested in potentially starting something new. And what we've, I think, learned about and are interested in is in a world where your customer relationship is the differentiating, you know, kind of factor.

If that's true, the way that you maybe serve them is by being and build defensibility is by being a kind of an authentic representative of that and member of that kind of community. And you likely have insights and expertise that you've gained over time from some portion of what you do. And so that's less that you are some person who thinks that, wouldn't it be fun to build an AI company and more that you, I don't know, I've spent your career cutting down trees for living and you have like a really interesting playbook for how you do that and you encode it into AI and you make it available to the other 30,000 people in the United States who are in the tree trimming business. And that's a guy named Jeremiah and we know him. And so I think we spend a lot of time on this kind of topic of an everyday entrepreneur, Adam.

Adam Brotman: That makes sense. do you, how, how do you, at a high level, how does your book and your, your, process incorporate AI at a high level? Can you kind of give us a thought of like, okay, so you, you want to get in your, you're in the tree trimming. You want to create a, I don't know, either a tree trimming business or a tree trimming service to help other people in the tree trimming business or whatever. Like how, like at a high level, how does your approach like involve AI? Like talk about that a little bit.

Henrik Werdelin: Well, I think in many ways it AI is not the pedagogy of entrepreneurship that we advocate. It is the Iron Man suit that makes it available to everyone. And so if you look at just how entrepreneurial technology have changed over at least my career as an entrepreneur, it used to cost \$5,000 to get going because you needed to buy a Windows NT server. And then you needed the first hire with somebody who connect this thing to the internet, right? And obviously the clout came around and you swipe the credit card. then when we did BarkBox, we didn't have to do deep tech kind of development because SaaS had been invented. So recurrently was there to take care of our subscription billing, recurrent billing.

And so in many ways with AI, what we think will happen is that people that normally could only serve people in their very local community now have the ability to identify those communities across the internet.



And so a neighborhood company don't have to be the mom and pop store around your corner. It can be your subreddit threat and people who speak different languages, you're now able to serve because they will be able to translate it as they're kind of having conversation with them. And you are able to have that much more neighborhood kind of feel in how you treat the customer because that you can now have agentic aversions of yourself that can help scale the communication layer. And so it's less that AI is kind of an element of it. It's kind of like it's an element in everything that cuts across.

Adam Brotman: Yeah, that makes sense.

Nicholas Thorne: I think it's also important, would say to me, my customer in AI happens to also be kind of a, it's a standalone book and we think it is worth reading on a standalone basis. We happen to also run a company called Autos, which is a platform where everyday entrepreneurs can work with our AI to identify an opportunity for a business and use our tools to create a new AI company. So we are practicing this as much as we are writing and talking about it.

Andy Sack: There's an element of your backgrounds, your career trajectory, your book, which I think certainly resonate with me. think it resonates with Adam. I mean, just your language of Donkey-Corn and your reference to in the AI era, like what is the new moat? Adam and I have talked about writing a second book. I haven't signed on for it. I'm not sure that I'll do that. But when we talk about one topic that is really of deep interest to me and just given your backgrounds at PreHype, like we've had similar but very different careers, I'm super interested in how business is changing as a result of AI. We're seeing it already. I think we're going to see that accelerate this notion of what is a moat given the acceleration, forget what's happened to today, just what's going to come in the next one to two years.

You know, we, Adam and I have launched two wrapper apps that, you know, we struggled with the wrapper app and getting run over by the LLMs. And we have a term for what business is going to become, which we call business 3.0. And I'm just super interested in differentiation and competitive moats. When you launch something in there and like anything that you launch, I'm sure you heard that DocuSign was copied within two to three days. Someone built a DocuSign replica in two to three days. So we're seeing the end of the SaaS era. How do you guys think about Business 3.0 and competitive moats, both in the book and more broadly?

Henrik Werdelin: I mean, like we obviously see it from two angles, right? We run, we're part of boards now, business we built that are big. And so we're trying to figure out how do you change, fast enough. And so how do you basically redesign your organization, in an age of AI? And then we're thinking about it, like, how do you start from scratch? And already now it seems clear to me that there will be businesses that will build on an AI stack and there'll be people, businesses that were not built on it most, you know, they're quite a like design in a different ways. And so I definitely think we were a hundred percent agree with you that there's like a, there's a fundamental difference on how these are going to be.

I think for, for us, like we, the, the big insight we had was when we started to build Audos we tried to see, can build AI only companies and AI only companies as in they would only have AI founders also. And so we ran a test online where we would scrape Twitter and Reddit for problem statements. And then we would basically create ideas for these problems. And then we would create landing pages and we would write conversion funnels. And basically the system would ping us when we had paying customers on a product that didn't exist yet. And it was really weird stuff that came up. And there was like this really awkward kind of like thing that suggested to us that you needed a human in the loop at the relationship layer between the customer and the founder.



I think we've been trying to find better vocabulary of what that means. There's a guy called Christian Masberg who wrote a book called Sense Making. And he's talking about the difference between thin data and thick data. And one of the examples that he gives is that humans will say things like, the party is just getting started, or the mood in the office is really weird. And it's very difficult for a computer to kind of like figure out what is the metric that you would put on that. And it's very easy for a human to pick up on that. And so our thesis is that in the near future for sure, but probably in the midterm also, you will prefer to buy something from a business that has a human in the loop. And the best way that we found to kind of quantify that is how many people go to the about page and how they bounce after they go to the about page.

And what we saw when we had AI only build businesses was you look at an Instagram that has been fully populated by an AI model and is super crystal clear for a human at a split second that this is not real real. And so if nothing else, you needed the human to basically be the front. You needed a person to be the about page. And so that led us down this kind of thought path and then led to the book.

Nicholas Thorne: But if you'll allow a moment, I mean, it sounds like Andy, you're kind of into it. So maybe to allow the wonkiness of it, you know, I think we take the point of view of like, that maybe the fundamental determinant of competitiveness is, you know, pace of innovation. so, that's a less less die not footnote it that's an Elon Musk, right, when he got into his little spat with Warren Buffett, a decade ago about moats and whether they exist or don't. But so if we just take the notion of like that going fast launching the next product, quickly is the determinant. We are of the view that, and obviously everything that we're all seeing about AI is that the pace at which you can launch products, like you can redo DocuSign in three days if you want to, the pace of launching products is only going to accelerate.

So you're going to be able to launch a new product if you know who to launch it to, and you know that they want it and how to get it to them. therefore building a business anchored in who you serve, not what you know how to do is really, really critical because, um, and the canonical representation of this for us and Henrik will be a little bit, uh, demure on it, but you know, BarkBox and Bark, uh, has never launched CatBox. And in fact, I was on the IPO road show when they'd get asked by the investors, you know, when are going to launch CatBox? And they would kind of giggle and say, like, we're not, we're never going to, because this is a company built for dog parents. they're the people we get. They're the people whose sense of humor we share. Dogs and cats are just different.

And so he can, you know, bore you, but he's won like, you know, awards at can and the like for having launched an airline for dogs, as a kind of not maybe the second product, but an end product serving that community of people. so I think the AI kind of world just massively amplifies that dynamic. I think Sam Altman tweeted this morning, we're entering the fast fashion era of SaaS. And I think it makes a lot of sense. You're going to be drop shipping software. We had someone on Audos, our kind of AI platform this weekend who runs a kind of app, a dating coach AI. And with some new tooling we've created, which is like basically some vibe coding type stuff. He just built a specific app just for one customer and sold it to them for \$50.

I was like, there you go. And he built a literally end of one piece of software for one person, sold it for 50 bucks and just kept moving because that's just like de rigueur at this point. I think it's a fascinating era, but I think pace of innovation becomes key. The question is therefore, where do get the insights with which to innovate? Well, we believe that's from intimate customer relationships. And that's the whole premise of the book and also our platform.

Andy Sack: So in that, does the nature of product fundamentally change?



Henrik Werdelin: I think so. Nicholas, do you want to go and talk about service systems?

Nicholas Thorne: I don't know. You go ahead. You sound like you have an answer.

Henrik Werdelin: Yeah, mean, like we basically think that the consultancy was a bad word in the venture world because it was non-scalable. But it was the ultimate personalization, right? It was the thing where you kind of abstract the way that it is done and you create the most optimal UI for the client. I'll come into your office, I'll listen to your problem and I'll come back and I'll basically present the solution in a way that's most convenient to you. Now, highly unscalable, that's why it was unpopular. But obviously with AI systems, it is scalable. And so we do think that, that in a one software development is kind of like where it's heading. I'll just anecdotally, if I look at how I use Replit right now, I've built basically most of the SaaS systems that I have been paying for \$30, \$50 a month.

I've now built a version of that. And obviously I only need like 10 % of the feature set but that's also the only thing I'm using. And so the question that Nicholas and I then was posting, if that is true, if we can build software that it can basically work just for us, who's going to help you architect that thing? Where are you going to go and buy that stuff from? Are you going to write all of it yourself? And our thesis is not. Now our thesis is that you will go to somebody who have the same problems as you do that understand that world very well, and they're going to graph basically a personalized solution for you because that they look so much like you that you want to basically fork the version of the solution that they've made.

Adam Brotman: It's like in these conversations, it's hard not to just get lost in your own head, right? Because we're talking about this just almost science fictional next five years. It's funny, Nicholas, your point about Sam Altman saying that we're about to enter the fashion phase of SaaS or maybe we've entered it. I actually sent that to Andy last night because for the exact reason you brought it up, like it's...Andy and I have been talking about his question about, you know, what does this mean from a digital product perspective? You know, what is, what's going to happen and what are the most, we, we actually have talked a bit about, you know, in, least from a, from a digital product perspective, it feels like distribution data and UI and trust are like four, maybe four of many.

Categories that are gonna be very important trust I get gets back to what you both have been saying about the human like front like and trust that you as a provider are like you guys are both saying another thing you guys said that resonates as well with me is that you as a provider of services are a member of that community and actually like Understand what it means to be a customer of that product so you can be a better developer or provider of that service. A lot of what you guys are saying really resonates with me. I'm fascinated by, first of all, by the way, I'm a big fan of I'm fascinated by Bark. I'm involved with a non-competitive pet company.

Andy Sack: You should start by saying you're a dog owner.

Adam Brotman: I'm a big time dog owner and I'm right now I'm a student of the pet industry and bark has definitely been on my radar as Andy knows. so congratulations and I'm a fan. And number two, yeah, I think your approach is interesting. your book's coming out in a week and congratulations on that. As Andy said, we're co-authors, you guys are co-authors. If you were to say, just to kind of bring this conversation back into maybe a more grounded state a little bit, do you, again, is the audience for your book entrepreneurs mostly? is it, like if I'm an entrepreneur and I read your book, what do you think my one or two takeaways will be? Like in sort of plain English, like, you I love this book because it got me to think about things this way. And I would tell another entrepreneur that what would they say to a fellow entrepreneur?



Nicholas Thorne: The audience is definitely entrepreneurs. think that's, you know, but, but again, I don't think it's meant for you want to build a billion dollar company. We think there's no shortage of, if you want to raise venture capital, Henrik happens to be very good at helping you figure that out. And we'll talk to you about that and is good at it himself. But that's like the VC side of this is not what this book is about. And so maybe to, I haven't read all of Jeff Buskanks book, but my impression of the 10X founder is like, it's a little bit more about building the first kind of one person unicorn. Again, this is not about that. This is like, if AI is going to make the unicorn possible for one person, well then like how many one person, a hundred million, one person, 10 million, one person, a hundred thousand, know, like what's under below the tip of that iceberg.

We think that's much more fundamentally interesting and world changing. And Andy, you brought up like, we're going to see displacement and all these things. And so we were, kind of interested in that of people, which I think today might be either people who are looking to start something new because they kind of need to, but probably more so for the moment as people who kind of probably have some sort of a job, they want to get going on something to the side and they're trying to figure out how to do that. I think the one main takeaway, I'm curious for Henrik's answer to that, but I'll throw it out.

I would not have thought this was particularly profound, but as to when you're thinking about what to start, given what we believe AI is going to do to the world start with trying to figure out who you're going to serve and why you are the person that could reasonably be the lead singer of that band. And I think if you evaluate that carefully, it's not a place that a lot of people start. When you ask the average person for what's their business idea, they tell you about some solution or some market and how big the market is, or maybe, maybe they say, well, I've noticed this problem. But very rarely do they say, imagine someone who fits the following profile and has, I think, following problems, plural. If you start from that place, we think that's a really interesting starting point. And I think the book would steer you towards that and give you both practical and academic rationale for why that might actually be a really interesting place to start from.

Andy Sack: It's really that founder market fit.

Nicholas Thorne: Found, yeah, even what we call it founder customer fit only to differentiate between not thinking to, you you ought to know who they are. have been like basically the, yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Andy Sack: Sure. Yeah, founder first customers.

Henrik Werdelin: And I think the other thing I would maybe add, and obviously it's a little bit ironic from somebody who had built a unicorn, but I think there's not a lot of advice out there and there's not a lot of encouragement for people who just want to build a business. And I think if you look at the backbone of the U.S. and most countries, we're very proud of these kind of mom and pops and this kind of like under forest of entrepreneurship, but we never really talk about, we never really celebrate it. And so what was interesting with pre-hype was we were fortunate enough that we never had to raise capital for pre-hype. And so most incubators, they're in the business of serving up founders to a seed round. Like the output of the process is often that they have to do that. And so everything is geared about like, how do you raise a seed round? And the luxury we had at pre-hype was that we didn't have to. And so when people came in and it became clear to us.

Andy Sack: That's right. And why was that? Why was that? Why were you? Did you have that luxury?



Henrik Werdelin: We ended up in a weird dual business model where we built an incubator for corporates. And so we ran the incubation program for a lot of Fortune 500s. And the people that we needed for that was very awkward entrepreneurs that corporates could never hire. And on the mean way, we had this halfway house of people kind of like who had all the pedigree to build something. They just needed some capital and they needed some time to just figure out what they want to do. A lot of times they just needed time. Like sometimes they just had like wounds to lick because they had just come out something that they felt was miserable. And sometimes, you know, like they just didn't have the next thing.

And so we had this kind of weird arbitrage of kind of very talented people that didn't know what to do next. And these corporations that knew that they had to build something new, they just were so good at making the sausage factory run that they had no idea what the process should be to build from scratch. And so. But what ended up happening was all these founders, sometimes we could look at them and say, it sounds like you just want to be a solo entrepreneur or you want to build a consultancy or you want to build an NGO, you do you. then, so I think Nicholas and I kind of like, because we were where we were, we ended up being super focused in the founder of just saying, let's figure out what makes sense for the next 10 years for you. And what often makes sense was to solve a problem for somebody they gave a shit about.

Andy Sack: We're running sort of close, close to time. actually want to direct you, Nicholas and Enric are we haven't met them all, but we think the audience of our podcast AI first is predominantly CEOs and executives of I'll call it mid to large size consumer facing companies. And many of them have businesses. It's not necessarily that we have mom and pop. People that listen to people who own mom and pop businesses who listen to this podcast as well. But we're really focused on sort of more mid size to large companies and really the the change that needs to happen at many of those companies as a result of the pace of AI development. What advice do you have for the executives and those kinds of companies given given what advice do you have?

Henrik Werdelin: Well, maybe I'll start, Nick, then you fill out. I mean, we wrote a book called The Acorn Method a few years back about how to use entrepreneurship to build new products and services. so we could probably talk at length of that. But I do think that the reality is the half life cycles of Fortune 500 companies are getting shorter and shorter. And so if you know one thing for sure is that somebody is going to come and try to build the business cheaper, right? The whole your margin is my opportunity.

I think that is just kind of amplified in AI. And so first thing is, doing nothing, I'm pretty sure I know where that's gonna lead and it's not a pretty place. I'll say on the AI side, maybe the thing that you won't hear other places. I think big companies and CEOs will have to figure out a way to measure some of these more softy, touchy-feely kind of things that we talked about in this podcast. I think, for example, the question of does your customer feel truly understood by your company is not a metric that we serve, that we mentioned only. And I think something like, for example, a customer effort score, like how fast does your customer get an answer from you? It's something that we ought to start to measure because that's the only way we're to force the organization to start to pay it seriously.

Obviously with community layer, we have NPS, know, so we have some kind of like rudimentary kind of metrics about this stuff, but I don't think we measure these things enough. And I think it's the thing that's going to make people stand up. I, thing I will say for a CEO listening is, in an H & AI, I do think that you'll have to have the permission to create more products and services to your customer. And I think if I say Nike is launching a new hotel, you both would go like, I can see what that will be. If I say, well, Hilton is launching a new shoe, I'm pretty sure you'd go like, what? And so I think answering the question about depth, about density, and about durability is something that founders for sure are going to need to answer. But I think CEOs are big companies will too.



Andy Sack: Nicholas, anything to add?

Nicholas Thorne: Find the 10 % of the people in your company are the most entrepreneurial and give them Repl.it and tell them to not come back until they've created something new and measure that. mean, we now run a new and just for one customer. Yeah. I could just get into the start being in the practice like today as soon as possible. Pay whatever the silly fees are for as many of these people to have access to these tools as possible. I'm sure that's to be true.

Andy Sack: New and special for at least one customer.

Henrik Werdelin: But don't necessarily think that the product is the same product that you're already serving. If you're something in supply chain, build something for somebody else in supply chain.

Andy Sack: Adam, super interesting conversation. I'm, curious what your, what, what does your mind gravitate toward? Want to highlight for our audience.

Adam Brotman: I can't wait to read the book. mean it. so the here for my head on this conversation, I'm fascinated by this because I really like what you guys are saying in this podcast for the following reason. If you, I'm going to get in the clouds here for a second for our audience and for you guys, if you're thinking about like, what's going to happen as you, as everybody should be, it listens to this podcast. It reads our book that like thinks about the space. Like the next 10 years, if not the next three years is going to be just wild because we're going to the things we're talking about sound like science fiction, but they're not like when the fast fashion of sass or vibe coding an app for just one person in 10 minutes.

The fact that that's possible today when these systems are about to become, you know, not just more intelligent, but more agentic on an autonomous level. Like the ramifications of that hard to wrap your head around. So when you, so what's the extrapolation of that? Well, entrepreneur, like entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurship is going to become more important than ever is my opinion. And I think we'd all agree with that. Like in an age where you can do everything I just said, you got limitless employees and infinite intelligence and software becomes abundant. uh, knowledge becomes abundant and employees become abundant. Like a lot of things are going to happen. One of which is entrepreneurialism. so like, how do you think about in an age of AI, entrepreneurialism? love that that's what you guys are tackling.

And, and I, I particularly Andy knows is really appreciate that you're going to the founder customer founder market fit. Andy knows it's like a passion of mine and how I think sometimes in my detriment and our detriment, that's, that is absolutely how I think I think it's I think it's important because your point is boy like there aren't gonna be moats in a lot of ways other than that and so if you can demonstrate that and connect emotionally with the customer because you Really carry that and that breaks through I Believe in that and I think that you guys are telling a really important I know pedagogy call, you know point there about like how to think about what does entrepreneurialism in the next five years look like that's different than the last hundred years. So I'm fascinated by what you guys are saying and I think it's really smart.

Andy Sack: Yeah, I'll echo. I love this conversation. We did an interview with Jeff Bussgang which I invite you guys, one of our more popular podcasts. I think you'll, I think you guys would both find it interesting. I like your classification about really the, I'll call it the venture funded unicorn path versus the, the Donkey-Corn Maybe it's great. That term's growing on me. I mean, I've been a lifetime entrepreneur myself. I'm an entrepreneur is entrepreneur. Like I've been a student of Steve Blank and Eric Reese and customer development and innovators develop the innovators dilemma.

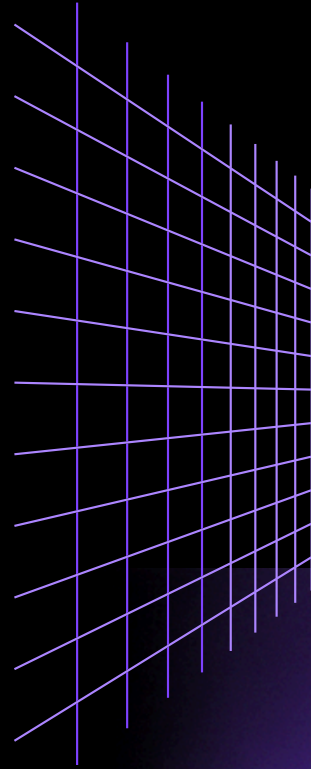


And, and so, you know, we, like I said, I can relate to much of your past experience as well as some of the theses behind the book. I do think that this, I don't think it's 10 years. And really, I think what you're saying is, guys, like, you know, you might want to try entrepreneurship and build a donkey corn. And I think that that's, I think you're right to focus on pace of innovation. I think you're right to focus in on these donkey corns and entrepreneurship and really shine a light on that. And I also look forward very much to reading your book, but those, don't think we covered enough about the moats and innovators dilemma, but I think we're going to have another opportunity to talk again soon. So I look forward to that conversation, but that's what jumped out for me. So with that, I want to thank our listeners for following along. And I want to thank both of you for making the time to join our podcast.

To our audience, thanks for listening to AI First with Adam and Andy. For more resources on how to become AI First, you can of course visit our website, forum3.com, our podcast, we have case studies, research briefings, and email newsletters there. We have a lot of amazing material on our website for leaders looking to expand their knowledge on AI. And remember, we truly believe you can't over-invest in your AI learning. Onward.



Ready to become an AI First organization?



Andy Sack

Brings over 25 years of entrepreneurial and investment expertise in high tech and finance.



Adam Brotman

As the inaugural CDO at Starbucks, Adam's background in digital innovation is unparalleled.

[Book a free consultation](#)