Entrepreneur Coaching
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Cleantech Pilots: Knocking Down Barriers

Silicon Valley’s Leading Cleantech Innovation Hub
ProspectSV Mission
Accelerate the adoption of clean technologies in

- Mobility: New ways of moving people and goods.
- Buildings: More efficient commercial buildings.
- Energy: New approaches to distributed energy & grid management.
Why Pilots?

• De-risk technology in real world setting
• Lay groundwork for conversion to sales
• Proof: for investors and customers

But getting pilots is challenging!
Viking Cold and Whole Foods
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Knocking Down Barriers

1. Be clear about what you need to test and site requirements
2. Match with target market(s)
3. Find a champion who wants to work with you
4. Be able to articulate benefits of the pilot (some may not be obvious)
5. Get help and referrals to identify pilot partners
6. Be alert to opportunities
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THE 8 MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER WHEN RECRUITING

for start-ups and early stage companies
Enertech Search Partners is a boutique talent acquisition and advisory firm that has been a partner to some of the most compelling emerging and market leading technology companies in the new energy economy, with a particular focus on distributed energy resources, emobility and smart infrastructure, energy finance and evolving business models such as transactive energy and blockchain.
WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ICONIC STARTUPS, WE LOVE TO FOCUS ON THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT OF A PROMETHEAN CEO

But what about the rest of the team?
IN THE VENTURE CAPITAL INDUSTRY, THEY TALK A LOT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOUNDING TEAM. BUT YOU MIGHT UNDERESTIMATE, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY STAGES, SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR DRIVE, SOFT SKILLS AND STRATEGIC PROWESS:

YOUR ABILITY TO RECRUIT AN A-CLASS TEAM.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The venture community will be looking for a cohesive and reality based plan around talent acquisition – *do you have one?*
QUOTE: "I TALK TO HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS EVERY DAY AND I KEEP HEARING VERSIONS OF 'COMPARED TO RECRUITING, FUNDRAISING WAS EASY'."

Your first five hires pretty much pick themselves, but getting from 5 to 50 is an entirely different ballgame.
YOU’RE NOT THAT COOL
What they are really saying after the interview
OUR NATURAL INCLINATION IS TO BELIEVE THAT ANY AND EVERY CANDIDATE SHOULD WANT TO WORK FOR OUR COMPANY. HOWEVER, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY JOB OPENING, IS TO ASK YOURSELF IF YOUR JOB IS ONE THAT THE BEST CANDIDATES WILL BE DRAWN TO.

- It’s a very competitive market
- You have to sell candidates
- What’s your attractiveness rating?
PURPLE SQUIRRELS DON’T EXIST
Quit chasing them
AH YES, THE HUNT FOR THE MYSTICAL, ALL-INCLUSIVE PURPLE SQUIRREL, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF NOT ONE, BUT TWO (OR MORE!) ROLES. LET ME CUT THAT CHASE SHORT FOR YOU — MORE THAN LIKELY, THAT PERSON DOESN’T EXIST.

- If they exist – you likely can’t afford them
- The process will suck up your time and resources
- Sophisticated recruiters will not help you
YOUR DOPPELGANGER
Why you shouldn’t hire people just like you
ITS VERY COMMON TO HAVE A COGNITIVE BIAS TOWARD PEOPLE WHO'VE DONE THINGS YOU'VE DONE, SAY THINGS YOU'VE SAID, AND THINK ABOUT THE WORLD THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT THE WORLD, BUT THAT'S CAN BE DANGEROUS.

> Be self-aware
> Fill the gaps and blind spots
> Diversity is always better
> Hire people who are smarter than you
IT’S THE PROCESS, STUPID

Why you shouldn’t act too much like a start-up
DON’T ASSUME THAT THE HIRING PROCESS IS SEPARATE FROM YOUR COMPANY AS A WHOLE. IT ISN’T. YOUR APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT WILL REPRESENT YOUR EMPLOYER BRANDING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

> Have a clear set of requirements
> Words matter – clearly define them
> Make sure other internal interviewers are prepared – get buy in
> Don’t leave candidates “in the dark” for more than 3 days
REVERSE ENGINEERING

Why you should choose function over form
I AGREE YOU NEED TO BE PRAGMATIC ABOUT BUDGETS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU’RE BOOTSTRAPPING, BUT NEVER SETTLE ON A MEDIOCRE HIRE. THERE’S NO PURPOSE IN WINNING A BATTLE BUT LOSING THE WAR.

> Don’t focus on the title, focus on the function
> ABP – Always be pipelining
> Always hire 1 “A” over 2 “B”s
> Be willing to stretch for a rockstar
WHAT’S UNDER THE HOOD

Why its so important to understand candidate motivation
ATTRITION IS A REALITY OF START-UP LIFE, BUT THE EXIT OF A TEAM MEMBER AT A CRITICAL HOUR AFFECTS THE MORALE AND SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO STAY, WHICH CAN TAKE MONTHS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM. ALL BECAUSE YOU HIRED A PERSON WHO NEVER REALLY WANTED WHAT YOU WANT.

> What is their time horizon – are they looking for a quick exit?
> Are they more interested in building a team than being “hands-on”
> What is their risk tolerance - did they negotiate hard for a severance package or guarantee?
> Do they NEED a job?
CULTURE CLASH

Why top-grading should be part of your culture
EVERY FOUNDER WANTS TO BELIEVE THEY WILL TAKE THEIR START-UP TO EXIT WITH THEIR ORIGINAL FOUNDING TEAM, BUT THE REALITY IS YOU WILL LIKELY HAVE TO MAKE VERY TOUGH DECISIONS ABOUT UPGRADING CERTAIN POSITIONS – IF YOU DON’T YOUR BOARD WILL.

- Recognize that the team you started with, isn’t necessary the team you’ll need 2 years from now.
- Series B can be a tricky time for talent acquisition – culture will likely shift with the need to scale – don’t be afraid it – embrace it.
- Understand your limits and be actively engaged with your Board.
WE DON’T NEED A RECRUITER

We have Linkedin
TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CERTAINLY OPENED THE DOOR FOR MANY COMPANIES TO GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THEIR JOBS, BUT UNLESS YOU ARE PLANNING TO HIRE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED, BELIEVE ME YOU NEED A GOOD RECRUITER. TRUE MATCHMAKING IS STILL MORE AN ART THAN A SCIENCE.

- Consider the business model – contingency, retained, retingency
- Always work with a specialist
- In the early stages, you need a partner, not a vendor.
- Find a firm that will be an extension of your team in order to really extract value
REMEMBER

Human Capital is as valuable as Financial Capital – treat it that way

Find a partner not a vendor when considering outside help in attracting talent
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Positioning to maximize value: strategy, differentiation, messaging

Cleantech Forum SF  |  Steve Weiss
January 22, 2018   |  Co-founder
                   |  Grey Heron
Your markets are crowded!... must stand out

for example.....

Source: Towards a Distributed, Digital and Flexible Energy System, 2017 Global Cleantech 100 Report
About Grey Heron: *translating technology into substantive businesses*

- 24 years, 130+ clients
- Strategy, marketing/positioning/differentiation, fund-raising, interim executive, advisory
- Strategic BD, M&A, turnarounds
- Objective: build value
Examples, big and small: projects and/or long-term relationships
Examples, big and small: projects and/or long-term relationships

- Genomatica
  - #1 in sector
  - >$150M raised

- Serious Energy
  - #1 in sector
  - >$125M raised

- Liquidlight
  - #1 in sector
  - acquired

- Imprint Energy

- Zendrive

- Gemalto

- Gigaspaces

- Hewlett Packard

- General Magic
  - turnaround
  - stock, $1→$18
Three key ideas, and then three stories

what’s different?    synch    reinforce
“made drywall sexy”
What was interesting?

• Unexpected
• Ginormous market
• Operating results(!)
• Intriguing appetizer opened door for bigger entrees
made chemicals sexy
credibility, visibility, leadership – against backdrop of failures

Genomatica, Novozymes and BASF have highest positive impression in sustainability technology

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Company</th>
<th>Very positive</th>
<th>Fairly positive</th>
<th>Fairly negative</th>
<th>Very negative</th>
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Q32: What is your overall impression of the following companies with regards to sustainability technology? Source: ICIS Chemical Business Survey of mainstream chemical industry. November 2017

[Image: Special Report: Renewables Survey - Renewables push into the mainstream]

Genomatica logo

Harnessing Biotechnology: A Practical Guide

Biotechnology is increasingly proving its ability to address chemical industry challenges. An engineering-first approach — Bioengineering — is vital to successful industrial application.

Cleantech Forum SF, 2018
Steve Weiss, weiss@greyheron.com

Grey Heron

[Image: The Kirkpatrick Award - ICIS Top 10 POWER PLAYERS - Genomatica - Biofuels Digest]

Biotechnology for strategic leverage

By using fermentation technologies, chemical companies can reduce complexity and costs in manufacturing.
What was interesting?

- Enable bigcos vs fight bigcos
- Minimal capex!
- Consistent messaging
- Continually build reputation
Differentiation on the back of a card
core purpose as genuine reflection of strategy

Lead the irresistible transition to sustainable materials through our technology and, united with industry leaders, make our world a better place.

real, innovative
united, relentless
Power a zillion IoT devices

- Printed, ultrathin, flexible batteries – non-lithium
What was interesting?

• “they go big, we go small”
• Focus on best apps
• Strategy to capture greater share of value created
• Leverage bigcos; avoid capex
So: what’s “messaging”? 

- Messaging = strategy; strategy = messaging
- Good messaging is: real, supportable, relevant, differentiated, clear – “hangs together” / makes sense
Messaging is a journey

• “Find the nuggets”: what’s special, what do audiences respond to, build story, “fire-harden”
• Start with a coherent “About Us” paragraph
• You’re in a long-term dialog with your audiences to build understanding; think sequencing and validation
• Messaging evolves, along with market, products
• Credibility counts; easily-damaged; manage with care
Delivering your message: create a marketing programs overview

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<td><strong>Announcements</strong></td>
<td>Your news pipeline: corporate, product, market, partners, technical…</td>
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<td><strong>Speaking/conferences</strong></td>
<td>Who you’re trying to reach and why, matched to when your story is relevant</td>
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<td><strong>Awards</strong></td>
<td>“Impedance-match” to your evolution</td>
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<td><strong>Visibility / thought leadership</strong></td>
<td>Find creative ways to break out</td>
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Some additional lessons

• Specifics are always good: credibility-builders
• Avoid exaggeration: credibility-deflators
• Be honest with yourselves, especially re comparisons
• Be clear re vision vs. current status
Many thanks!
Email me with questions

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