URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/a-good-team-needs-technical-and-non-technical-people

A good entrepreneurial company requires a variety of people with diverse skills, says Hennessy. Though there is a natural tendency to focus on the technology side of the company, non-engineering people are just as critical as the engineering people. In addition, the success of a venture is not based solely on the skills of the technical employees, but on the ability of the team to work together.
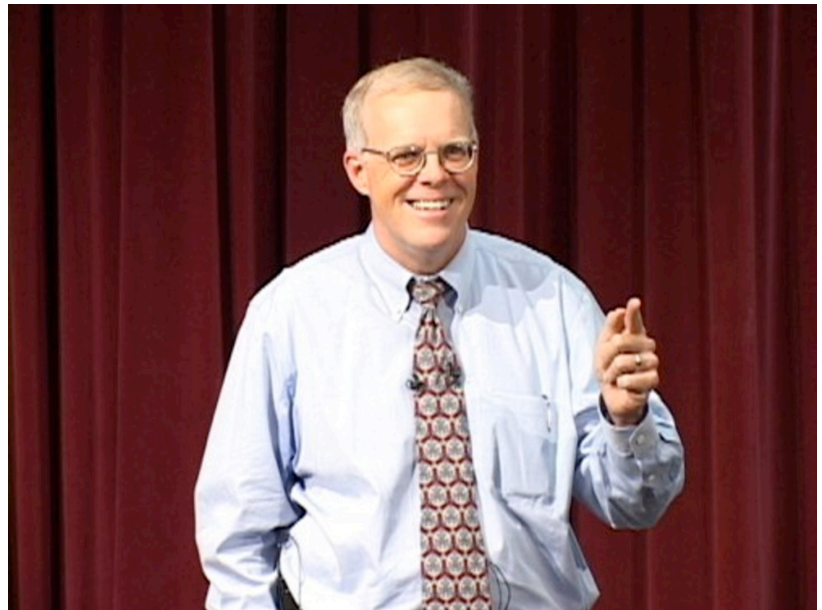
Transcript

The first thing I would say is that it takes lots of different kinds of people to make a successful entrepreneurial company.. Lots of different times those of us that are engineers especially those of us that have never been through in luck I mean the first time around, underappreciate the role of all the rest of the employees in the company.. In fact when I started to admit something as well, we will have 50 engineers and 5 other people and the company will all be great.. Well of course that doesn't work and in fact if the company is going to continue to grow its the non engineering parts that are going to grow much faster than that.. There is a natural focus on technology but as I have said most information technology companies don't fail because the technology does not work.. Besides the two reasons that I mentioned of missing the market and being late to the window, the other reason they fail is they can't build a team.. They can't work through the people dynamics which are absolutely crucial.. One of the hardest things to learn is how do you build a talented team where everybody in that team can contribute and play a role.. I think those that choose their role are absolutely and there are absolutely a whole set of issues that are outside the realm of creating the technology that are absolutely crucial and that takes a set of talents and capabilities that while many of the people may have had some technical background along the way, most of the people inside the company don't have anything to do with technology at some point.. They have to do with customer relations, building up the business, marketing it, hiring the rest of the staff, running the business on a day to day basis..

I think that's really crucial.. I simply did not appreciate how hard it was to find good people to do all those other functions.. And in fact I think this happens very often inside start-ups.. Especially start-ups that contain a lot of people who are on their first start-up.. They can get the best technical people in the world.. After all if you have got a great inside, a great invention, a great discovery, all these great young engineers, they all want to work on that.. Go and try and hire the rest of the company at the same quality level.. Get somebody who can be the CFO, get somebody who can be the CEO.. Get somebody who can be the vice president of marketing, get somebody who can head sales.. Get somebody who can run the human resource function because one of the things that young companies have to do is hire a lot of people and that turns out to be a much harder task than I think people realize until they try it..

So all those other pieces are critically important, now I think we should finally expose ourselves to all those and hopefully we will try people through a lot of walks of life and find them interesting...