

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/add-creativity-to-your-team>

Tim Brown, co-founder and co-CEO of Allbirds, observes how his education as a designer gave him valuable entrepreneurial skills. He encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to work with people with creative backgrounds.



Transcript

Tim Brown I felt, and a little bit less so, 00:00:06,515 but to a certain extent, still feel a level of insecurity.. I think as a business leader that is trained as a designer, and I think particularly in the early stages of sort of engaging with venture capital and trying to raise money.. I'd come over from New Zealand as an 18 year old.. I wanted to play football, but I had fallen in love with design and the University of Cincinnati, the design school there, was an opportunity to combine both of them, and I was head over heels, "This is exactly what I should be and what I should do." But as, as I became an entrepreneur and a business leader, I fundamentally had gone to business school and realized there was incredibly smart people that all had in incredible knowledge, but were running, running around, working out how to be creative and how to tell stories and how to innovate and how to operate in, uncertainty, or come up with an idea when everything that they had done probably through their career was programmatic.. I was like, "Oh, I've got that, but I just don't want to take that finance course." And actually, So I took an enormous amount of confidence from that and I, you know, there's not a lot of role models as a, as now a public company, CEO of designers that have done that job.. You might look at Mark Parker at Nike.. I think Brian Chesky does an amazing job, Airbnb of normalizing that.. And it's not that creativity should, should lead, but it should be in every room.. And the ability to operate in uncertainty, bring people together, synthesize disparate sources of knowledge, cut through complicated situations, and more than anything, feel okay trusting your instinct as a designer.. Which is really what you are honing, I think as you are educated as one..

I believe it should be in every room.. And the fortunate setup that we've had at Allbirds is that I founded it with an engineer from Berkeley who, you know, so I think about us as a, as a combination of art and science and I, I think in all the ways that I imagine a school of engineering has extraordinarily great minds.. Don't, don't be afraid of in all the ways that I probably avoided economics and engineering in my undergraduate to go look for the poets, the storytellers, and the filmmakers to round out your ability to impact the problem that you might be going after..