

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/attracting-a-motivated-team>

Miox CEO Carlos Perea was able to lure top talent to his venture by allowing the product to sell itself. He shares an anecdote about how his employee learned first-hand the power and impact of clean drinking water while on a trip to Honduras, and how this urged him to leave his career in solar power to help further Miox's goals. This desire to push helpful technologies forward can be a potent carrot and stick, Perea points out, and one that can't be ignored when trying to build a clean tech team.



Transcript

It's easier for that first reason.. It's because entrepreneurs want to have an impact and because you as entrepreneur or as a founder or as a leader within the entrepreneurial company, that's not enough.. You need to attract a team that's equally capable and motivated to want to have that impact and share in that vision.. And we have a clean tech idea, it's usually easier to have that kind of compelling reach.. I'll give a personal example of this.. Several years ago when I started at MIOX, I knew I needed a really high quality product development person.. And I knew exactly who I wanted.. Its was somebody who I had worked with at Intel, really well-qualified young man, three technical degrees from MIT.. I do not hold that against him.. It wasn't Stanford or Notre Dame..

But just a really talented individual I had worked with.. I knew he had the skills and the attitude that would be critical to us at MIOX.. One small problem was, he was already out of Intel working for small but very high profile well funded solar company.. I approach this person on a personal relationship and I said, "Hey, come take a look." He spent an afternoon and at the end he said, "I love the technology.. I really like the team.. I'd really like to work with you again.. I cannot leave the solar company.. We're doing world-changing things and I have a positive social impact.. And thank very much, it's not going to work out." Starting to from the bottom up.. So I gave him one of these pens..

And three months later, he came back and he said, "Hey, is that opportunity still available?" I jumped at the chance, I hired him, and he's been tremendously key to our success since.. But later on I learned what it happened.. He got hooked and the way he got hooked was, he went to South America with his family and lived in a situation where he do not have access to drinking water on daily basis.. His was the only family that do not get sick over a couple of weeks.. And he started not only treating his family's water but that of the community that he was in.. And he saw firsthand the kind of impact that could have.. So he came back and later on I actually learned that that solar company had offered him more money.. But we gave him something that they couldn't, which was an even bigger emotional or moral paycheck, if you will, in the equation.. And so to the degree that you want to have an Earth or world-changing idea, it's great that you can enlist to other folks and you just need to be aware of that power, because it is a really powerful mechanism.. People want to make a positive impact...