

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/eliminating-blind-spots>

Tim Kentley-Klay, co-founder and CEO at Zoox, talks about how his biggest worries as an entrepreneur are the risks that his team doesn't yet know about. He also describes the importance of bringing in domain experts and conducting experiments and collecting data, as opposed to having theoretical discussions about possible problems that the autonomous-vehicle startup might encounter.



Transcript

- I don't want to be cute, but I think the biggest risk is actually unknown unknowns and the abstract.. Because they are the things that you don't see, that really hurt you looking back, right? And so, one thing I've been learning, sort of leading with Jesse, Zoox is it's really important, the game almost in a way, when you're starting a business, is to bring into the company as fast as you can the main experts to expand those unknown unknowns.. Right? That's really important work.. And unless you go fast, it will stop you from clouding into something you didn't see coming.. So I think for me, what's really important is the culture of the company, who do we have around it, not just the board level but the advisors.. We have tremendous advisors around Zoox.. We have people like Carl Bass, who was recently the CEO of Order This! We have Gonzalo Rey, who's the CTO of Moog.. We have Andrea Howard, who's a Senior Software Engineer down at SpaceX.. People who have shipped a lot of product in very advanced systems that are giving really good advice to what is a young team at Zoox.. We have over 60 doctors, PhDs, postdocs from around the world working on the computer science aspects of what we're doing at Zoox..

And so I think that's really important in the abstract is to get rid of the unknown unknowns as fast as you can and part of that is also being pragmatic.. Rather than having a lot of conversation based on first principles or that's rational and academic it's like, well let's just put something on the vehicle and go out and test it and get some data and let the data speak to what's important and de-risk the business...