

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/networking-persistence-is-the-key-to-finding-co-founders>

Maureen Fan, co-founder and CEO at Baobab Studios, shares how she found advisors and co-founders by taking initiative. Fan shares her best practices: email alumni directories, keep in touch with colleagues and be persistent and creative in fostering new relationships.



## Transcript

- So the reason I put this slide up isn't to brag, even though they're sweet, the reason I put this up is to explain how I got in touch with these people and how the path helped.. Eric Darnell I met through Glenn Entis.. Glenn Entis is a co-founder of PDI Dreamworks Animation and the former CTO of Dreamworks Interactive and the CEO, wait, became EALA, and was the CEO of Dreamworks Interactive.. He was consultant advisor at Zynga, and as soon as I realized what he did in the past I'm like you will be my mentor.. And he said no, I'm retired, I don't have time, and my wife wants me at home.. I don't have time for you.. And I said, I'm gonna become best friends with your wife.. And he says, we'll see about that.. So it all worked out, I'm friends with his wife, and he's now my advisor.. And so when I decided to start this company I asked him, hey can you introduce me to Eric, because he hired Eric into Dreamworks for his first job..

Eric was an animation intern and became a big bad ass director.. So he introduced me to him.. Now Larry, remember when I said I emailed everyone in the Stanford alumni database to get a job? He was one of the people I emailed and he was one of the people who responded.. He said, do not go to business school.. Actually everyone said do not go to business school.. And I totally ignored everything they said.. Which he says was a good decision now.. You can always justify your past.. So Larry I kept in touch with and I ran into him during a Chinese New Years parade in San Francisco where he was taking pictures of his daughter fan dancing.. I was like, hey..

He's like what are you doing? I said, I'm starting a company.. He's like, oh maybe I should join you.. And that's how it all happened.. (audience laughing) So within one month I found my two co-founders.. And then Glenn Entis introduced me to Alvy Ray Smith, the co-founder of Pixar.. I emailed him to be my advisor.. He's like listen Maureen, I hate games, I don't believe in VR, sorry it's not gonna happen.. I said, let me just meet you.. So I met him at Crepevine and I put the headset on him, which is a mobile headset.. And he's like I'm gonna be your advisor..

So it's about persistence and constantly asking.. And then he introduced me to Glenn Keane, who is my favorite out of all these.. I know you're not supposed to have favorites, but he's my favorite out of these because he was the directing animator of the Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Pocahontas, all those things there, Tarzan, Tangled, Aladdin.. He's the most famous animator alive.. So he joined our advisory board as well.. Eric knew Mirelle Soria, the president, she's now the president of Paramount.. She was the president of Dreamworks Animation.. And then through all this stuff, I applied to Tribeca Film Festival to show our piece and then became friends with Jane Rosenthal, who heads up Tribeca Film Festival and is Robert Deniro's producing partner.. But the point of all this is, it's all through networking, and it's all through being persistent and asking each person to help you introduce you to another person, and even if they say no you persist until they say yes because people, in general, do wanna help you...