

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/the-number-one-startup-skill>

If you're interviewing for a job at a startup, says Octave Bioscience co-founder and COO Melinda Thomas, it's crucial to prove that you can take initiative. Early on in a growth-driven enterprise, literally everything needs to be built from scratch, requiring people who can take action quickly when they see an opportunity to improve something.



Transcript

- [Questioner] You talked about building tank teams.. Besides looking at a resume when you interview someone, what do you ask 'em, or what specific quality do you look at when choosing someone to join your team? - Sure, so, for a startup, I tell people that the characteristic above all the other ones you look at is initiative.. I say, "Tell me about a time you looked around you, "and whatever you were doing, and you said, ""That's something we need to do."" So, in a startup, nothing's set up, right? You have to set everything up from the beginning, so even if it was, as they looked at, they were in a lab, they saw that the inventory of the reagents in the refrigerators was always a mess.. They said, "Hey, I think we need to have "some inventory control, even if it's just a sheet "on the refrigerator," and they tell me and walk me through how they came up with the idea and how they got it all the way across the line.. So, initiative is the number one thing I'm looking for in a startup..