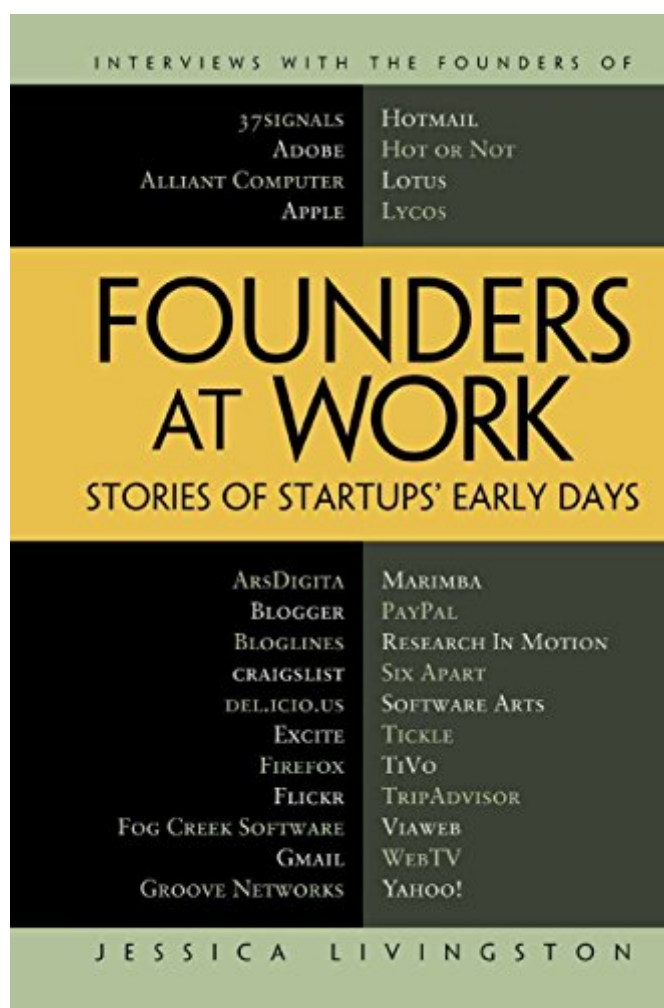


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# Founders At Work: Stories Of Startups' Early Days



## Synopsis

Now available in paperback with a new preface and interview with Jessica Livingston about Y Combinator! *Founders at Work: Stories of Startups' Early Days* is a collection of interviews with founders of famous technology companies about what happened in the very earliest days. These people are celebrities now. What was it like when they were just a couple friends with an idea? Founders like Steve Wozniak (Apple), Caterina Fake (Flickr), Mitch Kapor (Lotus), Max Levchin (PayPal), and Sabeer Bhatia (Hotmail) tell you in their own words about their surprising and often very funny discoveries as they learned how to build a company. Where did they get the ideas that made them rich? How did they convince investors to back them? What went wrong, and how did they recover? Nearly all technical people have thought of one day starting or working for a startup. For them, this book is the closest you can come to being a fly on the wall at a successful startup, to learn how it's done. But ultimately these interviews are required reading for anyone who wants to understand business, because startups are business reduced to its essence. The reason their founders become rich is that startups do what businesses do—create value—more intensively than almost any other part of the economy. How? What are the secrets that make successful startups so insanely productive? Read this book, and let the founders themselves tell you.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Summary Jessica Livingston has written an amazing book. If you want to read the stories behind some of the most well known software companies in the last 30 years, you will find it in this book. But Livingston hasn't just covered the usual suspects (Google, Microsoft), she has included a diverse collection from Steve Wozniak (Apple) to David Heinemeier Hansson (37 Signals), Dan Bricklin (Visicalc) to Blake Ross (Firefox). It covers a lot of ground from the early 80's software boom to the Web 2.0 starts ups. But there is more than just stories about starting companies, there is real advice from the frontline trenches of software start-ups. Keep your post-it notes and highlighter handy, if you are like me you will be annotating and highlighting a lot! The Audience If you have ever considered a start-up you should definitely read this book. It's like picking the brains of some very experienced entrepreneurs. Anybody that has already tried their hand at start-ups will recognize the value of this book. Most will probably feel like I did, and wish that they had had this book before they started their first company. It could have saved me many painful lessons (both financially and personally). Reading these interviews is like having 32 mentors. The Details Like many people I am always a little skeptical of 'success stories'. Just because someone did x, y and z, doesn't mean that I could follow these very steps and be as successful. Just because Aunt Ethel, who lived to be a 100, attributes her long life to drinking a glass of whisky every day, doesn't mean I can drink a glass of whisky every day and live to be a 100.

This is an absolute must read if your job, your passion, or both (if you're lucky) has anything to do with creating technical innovation. "Founders at Work" is a wonderfully meander through the stories of successful company founders - across several decades. Far from focusing on just those who made it big during the first dot-com boom or those who are profiting from Web 2.0, Jessica also includes some of the true pioneers in the field. She recognizes that, not only do these industry veterans have valuable stories to convey but, since many of them are helping to steer companies and venture capital funds to this day, their advice is quite topical and current. From the great introduction right through the final interview, this book is packed with great anecdotes, advice, and information and inspiration. Makes you wonder as to what the story is behind the story - how did Jessica get unfettered access to such a broad array of the founding fathers? I've included some

illustrative quotes from the book below. Give them a read and then go pick up this book. The printed copy is a bargain and the e-book version is a steal. It may turn out to be one of the best investments you ever make.\* "You guys are nuts. Throw out your business plan. Your customers--or potential customers - are telling you what your business should be. The business plan was only used to get you the money. Why don't you rewrite a business plan that is focused just on providing what your customers want?" - Q.T. Wiles advice to Charles Geschke (Cofounder, Adobe) on the real purpose of a business plan\* "There were some warning signs. Consider McKinsey, which holds itself out as one of the world's leading repositories of knowledge on how to manage a business.

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