Research of key success factor for Venture Capitalist while in Vesting to Internet Space

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ABSTRACT

In the past five years, Internet space has gone through several evolutions. Some Venture Capitalists has made more than 100 time returns on investments and some of them got lost when Internet stock crashed in April 2000. Evolution and innovation of Internet Industry keep coming. During the Paradigm shifting era, uncertainty and unknown factors continue to impact most of the investors and it requires in-depth exploring. It is said that the most dangerous factor to VC is to not invest Internet companies since they are all fearful of the Internet bubble coming. Most of business entities have been emphasizing that applied E- business is essential. How does VC face this e-World? My research is to try to explore and understand the Internet Economy layer. Which layer provides the best opportunities? Broadband communication and Always-On line will be materialized soon. How does VC seek the best shining start-up companies? How do they evaluate those start-up Internet companies in terms of critical success factor? If a simple checklist works well to evaluate each start-up Internet company, deal makers of VC become no value added at all, thus having no reason to exist. In an Internet industry, most innovative business model can only sustain one company, eBay is the first company to run an auction web site. Within six months later, Yahoo and Amazon followed the same business model without great success. It seems that a great idea business model has to be well implemented in very short period of time as part of critical success factor. According to co-research and report from Cisco and University of Texas at Austin, there are four layers of the Internet Economy. Among the top three Internet companies-America On-line, Amazon and Yahoo-Yahoo has gone through three rounds of re-inventing itself. First round, Yahoo is just a simple search engine of portal web site. In the second round, Yahoo re-invents itself again to have vertical integration with specific requirement of portals such as sports, pets, music, free email, etc. The latest evolution is to have a three-dimension business model-integrating Smart agent of specific search engine: direct and indirect payment instrument of E-commerce with some sort of marketing of consumer product. Successful company Yahoo still needs to reinvent itself to maintain its success, profit and growth. How does VC make decision factors on evaluating a start-up Internet company? How do start-up companies face those changes? This topic is becoming more interesting to my research. After my research with several visits both in domestic and Foreign VC, my analysis and research come to conclusion as follows: 1. It is very important to make judgements of the future of Internet industry and seize any opportunities. Speed is everything. 2. What unfair competitive advantage has a particular invested start-up company obtained? 3. Leadership of the founders in vision, innovation, best in selling skill are critical to lead company facing unknown futures and changes. 4. A start-up company with unique Internet business model with an entry barrier. 5. Ability of implementation on any great and innovative business model in very short period of time is essential. My study can provide a general guideline when it comes to investment of Internet start up companies. However, it still requires a dealmaker to put his/her personal experience and knowledge during the due diligent stage. Expected Capital gain has been a rule of thumb to evaluate success on any single investment. EPS and IPO are still valid on Internet company investment after Internet stock crashed in April 2000. Most of VC has changed back to conventional valuation mythology, no matter what kind of industry they invest their money into.

Keywords: Internet Economy; Venture Capital; Critical Success Factor; IRR; Post PC; Internet Appliance

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