

AFTER 20+ YEARS IN CORPORATE TECHNOLOGY

I STARTED AGAIN FROM ZERO

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After more than two decades in technology, I had reached a point in my career that a younger version of myself would probably have considered success.

I had spent years building technology platforms and eventually led global platform initiatives at Visa. I had a good career, stability and the kind of professional experience that takes decades to build.

Then I chose to become a startup founder.

Suddenly, many of the things that came with a large organization disappeared.

There wasn't a big team.
There weren't departments to hand problems to.
There wasn't an established brand opening doors.
There were just two founders, an idea and a lot of questions we didn't yet have answers to.

Corporate Experience Helps—but It Doesn't Exempt You From Starting Over

One of the biggest surprises about entrepreneurship was realizing that experience gives you perspective, but it doesn't allow you to skip the beginning.

When my wife, Sheela, and I started building Platesfull, we had to learn the business from the ground up.

We spoke with chefs. We tested the customer experience. We watched what happened at actual events. We made mistakes and changed processes.

Some days I was thinking about technology architecture. The next hour I might be helping solve a customer issue, reviewing a chef workflow or discussing marketing.

Titles become much less important when you're building a company.

The question becomes very simple:
What needs to get done today?

Technology Should Solve a Problem, Not Become the Product

After spending most of my career in technology, it would have been easy to start with the technology.

Instead, entrepreneurship reinforced something I had learned over the years: technology is most valuable when it disappears behind a problem it solves.

Finding the right private chef can involve cuisine, location, event type, budget, availability and the kind of experience a customer wants.

Those variables made the problem interesting from a technology perspective.

But customers don't care that the problem is technically interesting.

They care about finding the right chef for their anniversary, birthday, vacation or dinner with friends.

That distinction influences how we build Platesfull today.

Leaving Stability Changes Your Relationship With Risk

Walking away from a long corporate career wasn't a decision I took lightly.

When you've spent decades building stability, starting again feels very different than it does when you're 22.

You have responsibilities.
You understand exactly what you're giving up.
But you also understand something else: time has value.

Eventually, the risk of never trying can become greater than the risk of trying and failing.

I didn't leave corporate life because I stopped valuing what it gave me. Quite the opposite. Much of how I approach building a company today comes from what I learned there.

I simply reached a point where I wanted to see whether I could take those lessons and build something of my own.

Building With Your Spouse Teaches You Something Else

Sheela and I bring very different strengths to Platesfull.

She understands food, hospitality, marketing and the emotional side of the customer experience. My background is technology, platforms and systems.

That combination has been valuable.

It also means startup conversations don't always end when the workday ends.

Ideas can happen over dinner. Problems get discussed on weekends. A conversation that starts casually can turn into something we're building the next morning.

Building a company together requires trust—and knowing when to let the person with the stronger instinct in a particular area lead.

You Are Never Too Established to Begin Again

One of the biggest things entrepreneurship has taught me is that starting over doesn't mean everything you did before was wasted.

You bring it with you.

The years of experience, mistakes, relationships, leadership lessons and difficult decisions become tools.

But you still have to be willing to become a beginner again.

That's uncomfortable.



It's also incredibly energizing.

I don't know exactly where this journey will lead. That's part of entrepreneurship.

But after more than 20 years of building technology inside established organizations, I'm now experiencing something completely different:

building something from the beginning.

And sometimes, beginning again is its own definition of success.

Connect With Sharon

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