

20 NAMES TO KNOW



Charlie Lewis

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF VENTURE DEVELOPMENT, AZTE – ASU TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

How long have you worked with startups? 25 years

Twitter handle: @asufoundation

Define a startup: A recently created company based on a transformative invention developed at Arizona State University.

Explain your work over the years in local startups. In my role, I work closely with our faculty and post-doctoral entrepreneurs, although we provide services to student startups as well. I'm proud to say that in the past decade and a half, ASU faculty and researchers have launched more than 100 startups and attracted more than \$650 million in total investment.

Why do you think it's important to help local startups? I think it's important to empower and encourage entrepreneurship wherever you are. There's this myth that you need to get your start in Silicon Valley or New York City to be successful. That's only true if the local community isn't committed to fostering the intellect and innovation in its own area.

How do local startups help the community? I can tell you exactly, because we've studied this very issue. Last year alone, we looked at 21 Arizona-based and ASU-linked young companies. Together, they accounted for more than 1,100 direct and indirect jobs and contributed over \$114 million to the state's economy. While it's amazing to see the quantified local impact we've felt burgeoning for years at AzTE, the numbers are only part of the picture.

What do you like best about the work you do? I'm constantly impressed by the breadth of the many kinds of inventions coming out of ASU. When people think startups, I think most still conjure up something software related, but we're working with entrepreneurs making waves in fields such as sustainable energy, life sciences and medicine.

Tell us about the coolest trend in the startup space today: The ability to leverage cloud services and similar product offerings is enabling all kinds of innovation that would previously have required purchasing tremendously expensive computing power.

What are Arizona's greatest strengths with regard to the startup ecosystem? There's a wealth of talent locally and plenty of resources for mentoring and business guidance from local entrepreneurs who have been through the process of starting a company.

Christina Kehoe

COMMUNITY OPERATIONS, BEVY; DIRECTOR OF THE PHOENIX STARTUP GRIND CHAPTER

How long have you worked with startups? 5 years

Twitter handle: @ChristinaAkehoe

Define a startup: A young, small, privately held company whose business is created to solve a unique problem or perfect an existing, but inferior product.

Explain your work over the years in local startups? It began at Infusionsoft five years ago. It was there that my passion for tech and helping entrepreneurs was set on fire. Clate Mask is one of the most impressive, inspiring and supportive leaders I have ever met. His leadership compelled me to look for ways to build up others in the community. I volunteer a lot of my time to help support our local startup events.

Why do you think it's important to help local startups? I truly believe in the saying, "You may think the grass is greener on the other side, but if



you take the time to water your own grass it would be just as green." This ecosystem is like a startup in and of itself. We are shaping what it will be right here, right now. Whatever this community builds it into, that is what it will be. I often think, are

we creating the right environment to enable the next Elon Musk to emerge? I like to think so.

How do local startups help the community? It's a pretty powerful thing to watch when someone

Tom Curzon

PARTNER AND CO-CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE PRACTICE GROUP, OSBORN MALEDON

How long have you worked with startups? 35 years

Twitter handle: @tcurzon1

Define a startup: A new business venture, typically starting from scratch with respect to one or more of the following: innovative product or service, small founding team (as few as one member), no customers yet, unproven business model, unproven market, with plans to grow, albeit organically or with investor capital.

Explain your work over the years in local startups? I've coached startups through all phases of the startup life cycle, birth, financings, acquiring companies, commercializing products and IP, building teams, capital raising, IPOs, exits pre- and post-IPOs. Soup to nuts. I've also invested in and served as a business/strategic adviser to a number of them as an angel investor.

Why do you think it's important to help local startups? They are an important part of our economy and one of our pathways to a more exciting, healthy and rewarding future. And they need all the help they can get because they are the new frontiers of business and innovation.

How do local startups help the community? Jobs, experience, tax base, reputation, one of the pathways to our future, fun s**t to work on.

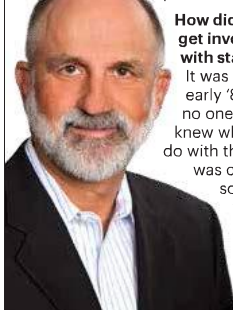
What do you like best about the work you do? I said a long time ago

and I still believe it: I like working with people whose hair is on fire!

Tell us about the coolest trend in the startup space today: For me, the autonomous and connected vehicle space is by far the most interesting and dynamic. I think it likely will be the biggest and hottest of all the tech trends I've experienced in the past 35 years.

What are Arizona's greatest weaknesses with regard to the startup ecosystem? For unique strengths, I believe it is our generosity. YesPHX and Startup AZ Foundation have it right: We are the world's most generous community for entrepreneurs.

What are Arizona's biggest weaknesses with regard to the startup ecosystem? Two things: We're not as connected as we need to be to each other and to the outside world, including outside capital; and our startups and their boards/advisers don't challenge themselves to bigger goals and higher bars. We have the talent and ability to innovate and need to step up to the plate with bigger visions and execution plans.



How did you get involved with startups?

It was the early '80s and no one else knew what to do with them. I was curious, so off we went, and along the way AI

Gore invented the internet and you know the rest.

Best takeaway from your own entrepreneurial experience? Don't assume that people will pay for your cool new product; you have to prove it and in a big way. Sometimes the product is really cool, but doesn't serve a need people will pay money to solve. That's one of the things that makes consumer-facing deals so very hard.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to start a business? Buckle up, focus/focus/focus, and don't forget to keep some semblance of balance in your life in important ways — burn out doesn't build much value in the end.

With the exception of funding, what are some of the biggest challenges for someone who is starting a new business? Staying focused on executing the next important milestone. In other words, avoiding shiny objects is crucial.

What individual, besides a family member, impacted you the most on your professional journey and why? Derald May was my key mentor, and he taught me how to listen well, and listen for what people mean, not just what they say.

How have you seen Arizona's startup environment change in the past few years? It is building an extremely cool momentum that springs from important leadership, role modeling and engagement by experienced entrepreneurs, increasing connectedness between ecosystem players, significant engagement by the angel investment community, and a bunch of really cool companies making good progress.