The path to successful collaboration

A research into successful startup and corporate collaboration. Both parties need each other to innovate and scale, but on the journey to success there are many things that can go wrong. Sample size: 137 startups (companies younger than five years with a strong focus on building a scalable business).

Why collaborate?

1. Access to the market (65%)
2. Capital / Funding (54%)
3. Sales network / economies of scale (54%)

How to enter?

1. Come prepared and know the problem you will be solving
2. Use your investor network to get introductions at the right level
3. Go to the preferred supplier of the large organization

What are roadblocks?

1. Slow decision making and red tape
2. Culture clash
3. The difficulty in finding the right person that actually needs the product and has budget

Governance model of the collaboration

- Joint venture (21%)
- Customer – supplier (24%)
- Licensing agreement (19%)
- Joint venture or equity investment (10%)

Thumbrules

1. Define and discuss the objective for the startup-corporate collaboration upfront
2. Use standardized governance of partnership establishment
3. Setup clear evaluation-phases

Speed up forces at the corporate side

1. Establish a clear entry point, have a process in place to deal with startups
2. Have a budget ready for pilots and experiments
3. Alliance manager: someone dedicated to help the startup to navigate internally

Company DNA of Outperforming startups with a successful collaboration

- Funding: at least 58% is funded
- Startup-phase: 44% is market-ready. 24% is ready to scale up and 4% is already beyond scaling
- Company age: 2 years
- Team: 9 full time employees with a total of 23 years sales and business experience and 28 years technical experience (e.g. software development)