

Learning from Silicon Valley Leaders

An Okinawa Startup Ecosystem Exclusive Event

This is an exceptional opportunity to connect Okinawa's startup ecosystem with Silicon Valley, one of the world's leading innovation hubs. Top entrepreneurs and investors from Silicon Valley share insights from a global perspective and deepen the dialogue with the startup community in Okinawa.

Date & Time: Mon, Sep 30, 2024 2:00PM – 3:00PM

Location: Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University | C209

Organizers: OIST / Silicon Valley Japan Platform (SVJP) / Offline Ventures

Format: Fireside Chat and Networking

Profiles of Participants



James Higa

Executive Committee Member, Silicon Valley-Japan Platform

Founder & Partner, Offline Ventures

Board of Governors Member, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology

Born in Okinawa. After graduating from Stanford, James worked as a photographer before joining Apple where he worked on the Mac development team and became one of Steven Job's most trusted advisors. He was also VP of RealNetworks and guided them through their IPO. He returned to Apple to work on the iPod and iTunes Store. He has supported many Silicon valley companies and was an early investor in Slack, Clubhouse, Notion, and Blue Bottle Coffee.



Dave Morin

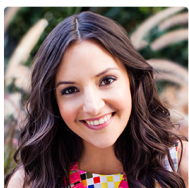
Advisor, Silicon Valley-Japan Platform

Founder & Partner, Offline Ventures

Co-Founder & CEO, Path

Founder & Partner, Slow Ventures

Dave Morin joined Apple after college and was also an early member of Facebook, where he launched a number of services before founding Path, a new social networking service. He also founded Slow Ventures, a venture capital firm that has invested in several leading technology companies. He has served on the board of directors of the Ski and Snowboard Association of America and on the boards of several leading startups, including Eventbrite and Dwell media.



Brit Morin

Founder & Partner, Offline Ventures

Founder & CEO Founder, Brit + Co

After college, Brit moved from her native Texas to Silicon Valley, where she worked at Apple on iTunes and then at Google for 4 years. In 2011, at the age of 25, she left Google and founded Brit + Co, a media and e-commerce platform for female DIYers and a creative community that connects creators, designers, chefs, and inventors. The platform has 1 million monthly users through its website and mobile app. Her spouse is Dave Morin, co-founder Path.



Guillermo Rauch
CEO, Vercel

Born in Argentina, he gained attention at a young age developing open source libraries such as MooTools and Socket.io. He co-founded LearnBoost and Cloudup, which he sold to Automattic, and founded Vercel in 2015 to streamline front-end development based on Next.js. He is currently leading innovation in web performance and making a significant impact on the developer community.



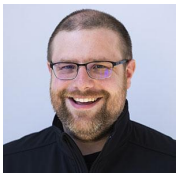
Kirsten Green
Founder & Managing Partner, Forerunner Ventures

Kirsten founded Forerunner Ventures in 2015, which specializes in consumer-facing businesses, and has backed Warby Parker, Glossier, Dollar Shave Club, and others. With a deep understanding of consumer behavior and keen insight, she is highly regarded in the industry for nurturing the next generation of leading companies.



Yvonne Hao
Secretary of Economic Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Yvonne has over 25 years of executive business experience, including as an advisor and managing director at Cove Hill Partners, an investment firm she co-founded, and as an operating partner at Pillar Ventures. She is also a former operating partner of Bain Capital and currently serves on the boards of various companies.



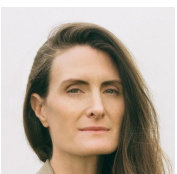
Alex Haro
Co-Founder, Hubble

As co-founder of Life360, he built a successful family networking app. He co-founded Hubble, providing solutions for distributed teams. He is committed to innovation that supports new ways of working in the post-pandemic era and leads efforts to shape the future of working environments.



Jaron Waldman
CPO, Cohere

Jaron is Chief Product Officer of Cohere, a leading enterprise AI platform. He is a lifelong product developer, entrepreneur and angel investor. He has founded several successful companies, including Curbside (acquired by Rakuten), and Placebase (acquired by Apple).



Ara Katz
Co-Founder & Co-CEO, Seed Health

Ara became interested in the microbiome through her breastfeeding experiences as a mother, and her mission is to explore the importance of microorganisms to the health of humans and the planet. Seed Health's flagship product, Daily Synbiotic, is a revolutionary combination of probiotics and prebiotics. Prior to Seed Health, Ara co-founded Spring, a mobile commerce company, and was involved in the launch of Apple Pay.



Chris Ovitz
Founder, Electric Ant

Chris is a serial entrepreneur who has founded and supported numerous startups in the technology industry. He co-founded Viddy, which became a mobile video platform with over 70 million users and was sold to Fullscreen. He then co-founded Workpop, a recruiting platform primarily for essential workers, which was acquired by Cornerstone OnDemand. He has also held business development positions at Scopely and Adly, and served as an advisor to Code.org and Box. Prior to founding Electric Ant, an early stage investment, he co-founded OK Play, a media app for parents and children, acquired by Dapper Labs.



Ben Broca
Founder & CEO, GiftShop

Ben is an entrepreneur from France, He is founder and CEO of GiftShop, a platform for designing, manufacturing, and distributing high-quality products for the hospitality industry, providing solutions for restaurants, hotels, and other brands to offer compelling products that help them build strong relationships with their customers. His previous successes include co-founding Homee, which combines interior design and technology, and CloudKitchens, a cloud kitchen-related startup.