



## Upstart

A new approach to funding and mentorship...

The startup is you!

by Dave Girouard D'88, TH'89, Founder and CEO

I've spent most of my post-Dartmouth life in Silicon Valley (about 19 years) and have had the opportunity to work at great companies such as Apple and Google. After many years at Google, I decided it was finally time to strike out on my own, so in April of this year, I left Google to found Upstart.

The idea for Upstart was seeded just about a year ago. I was talking to kids who were in the latter part of their college careers and I noticed an interesting trend: many kids seem to have an idea, a startup, or just a direction that they're really excited about. Yet for very practical reasons, they were opting to take a corporate job that they were much less enthusiastic about, rather than jumping in with two feet on what they really want to do. Two issues stuck out as the primary culprits preventing grads from following their passions: lack of confidence or support in how to get started, and student debt. I also thought about how at Google, we hired kids out of college in droves, and got quite good at analytically figuring out who would be successful at Google. Yet these kids - even Dartmouth kids with amazing track records - were essentially illiquid and funneled sadly into a traditional career path they didn't want.

I launched Upstart to fix this - to give kids another alternative when they finish school. Upstart is a crowdfunding platform that lets you raise capital in exchange for a small share of your personal income over a 10 year period. Venture capitalists like to say that they invest in people, rather than ideas, but we're actually doing it. Upstart provides the "upstart" with a modest window of economic freedom - maybe \$30,000 to \$50,000 - along with support from backers (think Dartmouth alums!) who have been there before and can help the student pursue a riskier and more fulfilling career. We aren't a fund - Upstart funding comes from individual backers (a la Kickstarter) who want to "invest" in kids whose potential they believe in.

My good buddy Bill Bunker '88 was very involved in the early thinking and research around Upstart, and my old friend and Topliff roommate Brett Matthews D'88 stepped up to back some of our very first students. I'm very grateful for the support they've given me! We recently funded our first batch upstarts - including Nathan Sharp T'12. We are piloting Upstart on 5 college campuses this Fall - Dartmouth among them, of course - and would love to see the next generation of Dartmouth entrepreneurs getting funded by Dartmouth alums! Come see us at [www.upstart.com](http://www.upstart.com).

The image shows a promotional graphic for Upstart Beta. At the top left, the word "Upstart" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "Beta" in a smaller font directly below it. The background is a dark, blurred image of what appears to be a crowd of people. In the center, the phrase "The Startup is *you.*" is written in a large, white, serif font, with "you." in italics. Below this, a thin white horizontal line separates the main headline from the tagline "A new approach to funding and mentorship", which is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

## How to use the funds

### Build your business

Make a product, test your market, build your team

### Pay student loans

Cover your payments or retire your debt altogether

### Focus on your craft

Do freelance work, paint, sculpt, or write a book

### Work to learn

Gain relevant experience or work to make a difference