

Helping Millennials plan for the future or RoboAdvisor start-ups looking for validation?

By Calvin Yee



On Thursday night, a friend of the Firm rang me for advice on taking an offer to become the CMO of a promising fintech startup company (on a search led by a competitor). Should he take the job, or wait for another opportunity?

I did what was expected. I gave the friend context on the company, though was clear to state that since I was not leading the search he should really ask the other search firm. He then went on to explain that the founder was an old friend and he believed in him, but his questions were really about the offering – a financial planning app aimed at Millennials.

Is good talent being lured into trendy businesses that won't survive?

As my fintech colleagues will attest to, the last thing we need is another website or app that helps Millennials plan for their future. This is a generation with extremely high expectations for the kinds of jobs they'll get, what they'll earn and how much disposable income they'll

have. I sometimes think they believe they will inherit earth – take roles motivated by purpose vs income, live well, and still save more than any other generation: I hope they are right and I am wrong.

RoboAdvisors are quite common now and I daresay many are reaching a higher level of technology stability. Certain well-funded start-ups as well as established companies are in the market - many of them with unique differentiators and targeted customers.

But do we need another? The reality is that many of these RoboAdvisor start-ups are doing it simply because they can – because of the disproportionate amount of capital made available over the recent years, the almost regular focus on Millennials as an audience, and given that winter is coming and many of these companies will be lucky enough to do a Series C downround.

So the question is - is good talent being lured into possibly trendy businesses that won't survive? If so, the wiser course for these startups (and the talent considering it) might be "I can, but I shouldn't, therefore I won't...."

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