

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



RYAN BROWN

Salient Energy | California, United States

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As the co-founder and CEO of Salient Energy, Ryan Brown has experienced the entire life cycle of a tech start-up. With Ryan at the helm the zinc-ion battery company has grown tremendously from a concept born out of a chemistry lab to a product being prepared for commercialization in the stationary energy storage market.

Motivated by the clear need for innovative technologies to address climate change, Ryan strongly believes in the need for more tech startups. In a rapidly changing world, he believes that risk-taking is important, and that his risk tolerance helps him excel in what he calls Deep Tech. As opposed to traditional technology companies which have a clear path to commercialization, Deep Tech has much greater risk. Deep Tech companies are looking to bring promising ideas to life but do not have a clear path to commercialization, meaning there is no guarantee of generating a viable product. Add this to the uncertainty around project timelines, required resources, and competition with other startups for funds, and more traditional pathways to commercialization (such as software), and there is a clear need for a CEO who can present a strong case to investors. This is where Ryan's background in both finance and technology plays a pivotal role. In being able to translate the potential of Salient's technology to the finance world he has helped the company raise the funding it needs to continue research and development.

With their success to date, Ryan is very proud of the fact that Salient Energy has been able to succeed in the energy storage startup space without overpromising and underdelivering. In the relatively new field of battery energy storage there are a lot of companies who have wasted a lot of invested funds, diminishing trust in the industry.

The majority of the Salient team is made up of scientists and engineers who are able to critically evaluate the product each step of the way. In addition to this, Salient does not operate under strict deadlines to produce a finished product, which gives the team more flexibility to identify important design flaws and go back to address them, rather than build overtop of them in a patchwork approach.

Like anything else, Ryan recognizes the pros and cons of being the CEO of a Deep Tech startup. To succeed requires being someone who can take on risk and knowing that you're doing so for the right reasons to be able to push through. The amount of responsibility you take on is ultimately up to you

and being able to recognize any sacrifices you must make plays a role, again stressing the importance of being passionate about the potential for the company to make an impact. An upside to this responsibility is you can prove yourself in the industry. As opposed to working within the confines of a large company, there are ample opportunities to demonstrate your skills in a smaller company and climb the career ladder. A downside to all this is the uncertainty of a startup, where things can quickly and unexpectedly go wrong. Just as there is the opportunity to prove yourself when things go well, you must bear the responsibility when things go poorly, even if they are out of your control.

Ryan's advice for up-and-coming researchers and entrepreneurs is that there are nowhere near the number of startups that there should be in a field as rapidly changing as energy. He strongly encourages new entrepreneurs to start working on a big problem they are passionate about, and dive into innovative technologies, whose business cases strongly benefit from the dynamic nature of the shifting global energy sector.