

Rafe Furst

<http://rafefurst.com> • [LinkedIn](#) • [Full CV](#)

I help strategic thinkers make winning decisions

"Everybody has a superpower. Rafe somehow ended up with the power of transformation.
The more time you spend with Rafe, the better your life will get."

Steven Kotler, 3x NY Times Bestseller

"The thoughtfulness he brings makes Rafe my go-to for any dilemma
or whenever I just need a deep thinker to bounce things off of. "

Annie Duke, World Series of Poker Champion

"[Rafe] has an undergraduate degree in Symbolic Systems
and a graduate degree in Computer Science, both from Stanford,
and in 1999 he banked a small fortune
by selling an online promotions company he helped found."

New York Times Magazine

By The Numbers

- \$450,000,000 in liquidity to investors
- \$40,000,000 raised in investment and charitable donations
- 2011 first purchased Bitcoin
- 2006 World Series of Poker PLH Winner
- 1997 first web startup launched
- 200+ Founders advised / coached
- 20+ Direct angel investments
- 6 Unicorn investment looks (2 captured)
- 5 Startups co-founded
- 4 Innovative venture funds launched
- 3 Industry awards for video production
- 2 Awards for cancer prevention work
- 1 Peer-reviewed scientific publication

Domains

- AI
- Applied Game Theory
- Blockchain / web3
- Cryptocurrencies
- Cognitive Sciences
- Complex Adaptive Systems
- Creative Problem Solving / Vision
- Evolutionary Biology
- Gaming Industry
- Investing in Innovation
- Poker
- Startups
- Strategic Thinking
- Venture Capital

TED Talks: [Cryptocurrencies](#) • [Equity Crowdfunding](#) • [Personal Investment Contracts](#)

High Stakes: [World Series of Poker Win](#) • [Ultimate Sports Adventure](#) • [Boom Vision Podcast](#)

Articles: [Transrational Game Theory](#) • [Seeking Aleph](#) • [Genome Architecture Theory](#)

[Don't Look At Your Cards](#) *Liberating Strategies for Poker, Business & Life*

I live in Boulder with my wife, our three sons, four chickens, two goats, a cat, lizard and goldfish.
My personal journey can be found [here](#).

Crowdfunder (2012 - 2016)

Why: Democratize access to capital for early stage entrepreneurs, and access to venture investing opportunities for everyday retail investors.

Role: Co-Founder, Investor, Chief Strategy Officer

TEDx Talk: [The Magic of Crowdfunding](#)

Company Highlights:

- Successfully worked with Congress to include industry-favorable crowdfunding provisions in the JOBS Act of 2012
- Thought leadership and public awareness for the space
- Built a best-in-class software platform and UX for founders to fundraise and investors to make investments
- Innovated a hybrid equity/rewards crowdfunding model that was successful for many founders
- Created an effective concierge fundraising advisory team and process
- Hosted multiple founder/investor events and education around the funding process
- Launched LatAm subsidiary based in Mexico City
- Built and integrated a broker-dealer
- Secured high-profile partnerships with celebrity investors and founders
- Crowdfunded \$18M for Crowdfunder itself from hundreds of new angels and traditional VCs
- Set equity crowdfunding record by raising \$2.75M on day one (\$5.2M total) for Neil Young's PonoMusic
- 12,000 individual and institutional investors on platform
- 36,000 companies on platform
- Helped 100 companies get fully funded, with an average deal size of \$1.8 million
- \$160 million in investment commitments facilitated on-platform

Personal Highlights:

- Leveraged learnings from a failed equity crowdfunding investment to successfully and safely enter the newly regulated space
- Raised a significant portion of our funding
- Recruited Crowdfunder Mexico CEO and developed key investor relationships in Mexico
- Recruited a majority of our Advisory Board
- Built the fundraising advisory capability
- Helped dozens of founders raise money via coaching and hundreds more via writing and speaking
- Pioneered VC Index Fund, a groundbreaking investment platform, partnering with Tim Draper and 50 top VCs, investing in 30 companies in year 1.
- Pioneered SPV syndication model and funded a handful of high profile companies, including Yao Ming's Yao Winery
- Pioneered Warrants model for fundraising services & built portfolio of 50+ warrants from it

Full Tilt Poker (2007 - 2011)

Why: Market opportunity to allow poker enthusiasts around the world to learn, chat with and play with the pros.

Role: Investor, Consultant, Board of Directors

Company Highlights:

- Moved from #180 to #2 in customers and revenue over a 6 year period
- Built the best software in the industry
- Built the top brand and marketing in the industry
- Directly employed 500+ people across 3 continents
- Created brand recognition, celebrity and a stable business platform for 125 pros (most of whom had unstable careers prior)
- Built and supported an entire ecosystem of tens of thousands of affiliates (individuals and small businesses)
- Created several hit TV shows featuring our pros and others
- Distributed \$440 Million in investor profits over 4 years.
- Negotiated a settlement agreement with DoJ to shield owner group from clawbacks

Personal Highlights:

- First seed money in, catalyzing a successful launch
- Brought together top pros with silicon valley techies and investors as ownership group
- Recruited legendary "Mad Man" Bob Wolf as CMO
- Recruited key employees in tech, marketing and operations
- Worked within the initial marketing team on high profile campaigns and weekly emails
- Worked with the learning/content team to create evergreen educational content
- Mediated and negotiated between ownership group and management
- Served on the Board when others refused due to personal risk and animosity
- Represented the site as a sponsored pro at tournaments, on TV, print and other earned media appearances, including a [World Series of Poker win on ESPN](#)

The Crypto Company (2017 - 2018)

Why: Allow everyday retail investors to get diversified exposure to the nascent crypto space via the public stock market

Role: Co-Founder, Chief Investment Officer, Investor

TEDx Talk: [The Dawn of Programmable Money](#)

Company Highlights:

- Launched in 2017, seven years before Bitcoin ETFs
- Successfully adapted Warren Buffet's Berkshire model in the tech space
- Pioneered a GAAP-compliant audit process for a diversified and secure crypto portfolio, and successfully passed independent audits for SEC filings
- Completed two successful acquisitions of profitable companies (including a foreign company)
- Passed two separate SEC investigations (and stock halt) with a clean record
- Getting stock trading again and allowing early investors to get liquid (some of whom turned a healthy profit)

Personal Highlights:

- Brought together the four partners
- Catalyzed the seed round through my personal network
- Recruited VP of Ops, CTO, Board Member, 3 analysts, dozens of advisors
- Pioneered "crypto barbell strategy"
- Managed that strategy to a 13x return total portfolio return
- Pioneered the first ever investment into a publicly listed company using crypto
- Followed my heart/gut by quitting as soon as I felt misaligned with the company and partnership.

Expert Insight (2004 - 2007)

Why: Get inside the mind of experts as they share their thinking, feelings and strategies in an experiential instructional video and audio.

Role: Co-Founder, CTO, Investor, Producer, Executive Producer

Company Highlights:

- Pioneered a novel, entertaining and effective format for learning expert strategy across multiple domains
- Brought together Hollywood filmmaking talent with world-class domain experts
- Secured partnerships with world champions and experts across multiple domains:
- Produced 5 feature-quality instructional DVDs
 - [Final Table Poker](#) (Phil Gordon, Celebrity Poker Showdown, WPT Champion)
 - **Short Game Golf** (Jim Furyk & Fred Funk, PGA Tour champions)
 - **Black Widow Billiards** (Janette Lee, World Champion)
 - **Card Trick Magic** (Stephan Vanel, Vegas Headliner)
 - **Beating Blackjack** (Andy Bloch, MIT Blackjack Team)
- 3 industry awards for instructional video
- Convinced a VC to leave their firm to become our CEO

Personal Highlights:

- Seed round fundraising
- Recruited and integrated key employees in tech, operations, production, graphic design, marketing, distribution and sales.
- As CTO, created a B2C e-commerce site with end-to-end fulfillment center
- Producer credits on Final Table Poker and Beating Blackjack
- Personally returned capital to an investor who was unhappy

Pickem Sports / Internet Sports Network (1997 - 2000)

Why: Generational opportunity to ride the coming internet wave and become a successful startup entrepreneur with friends.

Role: Co-Founder

Company Highlights:

- Bootstrapped (no outside investment)
- Pioneered bringing office pools and sports contests online
- Created flexible technology platform for customized white-label business
- Signed up dozens of paying corporate clients, including Yahoo!, CBS Sportsline, Daimler Benz, and many offline media companies who were coming online for the first time
- Products launched on 4 continents and multiple languages
- Acquired after just two years for \$7M in cash and stock

Personal Highlights:

- Brought together “Internuts” group (15 friends), brainstormed for several months, three partners emerged to form Pickem
- Negotiated office space from former employer
- Defined and created the UX and product as well as software architecture and web services ops
- Closed dozens of client companies, small to large, domestic and international
- Led the acquisition process and negotiated the terms so each partner got \$1M in cash
- Helped integrate the tech and operations of 4 subsidiaries across 5 offices in U.S. and Canada
- Became CTO of the public company who acquired us
- Overhauled our technology to scale on Oracle
- Worked with a COO who became a mentor and helped bring the management crisis back into harmony

Personal Investment Contracts (2009 - 2010)

Why: Pioneer a new way of investing in a person rather than their company or idea

Role: Inventor, Investor

TEDActive Talk: [Investing in Superstars](#)

Project Highlights:

- Created a legally-vetted, highly effective 3-page contract to invest in the lifetime earnings of individuals.
- Teamed up with a partner to invest \$250K into filmmaker, Jon Gunn, for 2% of his lifetime earnings
- Immediately got Jon out of debt, catalyzing his career to the next level of professional success, personal happiness and family fulfillment
- Blog post went slightly viral and received positive write-ups in Wired and other media
- Inspired a group of three entrepreneurs to create Thrust Fund to fund themselves with PICs
- Inspired the founders of a PIC startup (Pave), who asked Rafe to join their Advisory Team
- Projections to be in the black on my investment by year 16, with significant and unlimited upside
- Gunn's films are now nationwide releases with Academy Award-winning talent
- Gunn recently became a Partner in a \$500M production and streaming platform backed by Amazon, Lionsgate and other heavy hitters

Personal Highlights:

- Helped my family in a significant way (Jon Gunn is my brother-in-law)
- Created a lasting, inspirational legacy for others to build on
- Created a potentially lucrative long-term investment revenue stream for myself

Accelerating Possibilities (2008 - 2011)

Why: Connect people, ideas and resources to make good things happen faster

Role: Principal, Investor, Community Leader

Highlights:

- Created a model, practice and brand around catalyzing people's success and entrepreneurial dreams
- Inspired 2,400 people to organically join the Facebook Group
- Brought critical seed capital to 25 different individuals, startups and non-profits in innovative ways
- Created goodwill and collateral value that was exponential relative to the capital investment
- Inspired a dozen impressive and impactful individuals to apply to be my Apprentice

Ultimate Sports Adventure (2003 - 2004)

"Two guys in a monster RV on the greatest roadtrip in sports history"

Why: Why not?!

Role: One of the two guys :-)

Highlights:

- Sports Illustrated Road Trip Hall of Fame
- 370 days on the road
- 42,000 Miles
- 40 U.S. States
- 120 Media Appearances
- \$100,000 Raised for Prevent Cancer Foundation
- Top 25 U.S. golf courses played
- 27 of 30 Baseball Stadiums
- 138 Events Attended, including
 - 2 Super Bowls
 - World Series
 - College World Series
 - Little League World Series
 - NBA Finals
 - Stanley Cup
 - Daytona 500
 - Indy 500
 - U.S. Open Tennis
 - U.S. Open Golf
 - The Masters
 - PGA Championships
 - World Figure Skating Championships
 - Kentucky Derby
 - Belmont Stakes
 - Preakness
 - March Madness