5 MINUTE READ

Who we look for.

Exponential is its people. Our Community, Launchpad, and Fellowship programs are made for — and composed of — a specific type of person.

TL;DR

We look for courageous builders with a heart that love their craft, and care about their work. We act early in the careers of our Fellows, looking for students in their last year of studies, or first three years of professional experience. Our programs are primarily focused on people who can code.

In our Manifesto you'll see that our initial approach is a focused one. While talent is everywhere, we'll focus on **technical talent from Spain**. This means that the ability to code is a requirement.

We hope to be able to open it up for other backgrounds in the coming classes. Here is how we view exponential talent.

Exponential Talent

We look for courageous builders with a will to serve, because we believe that's what it takes to create exponential organizations.

What does it take for someone to be exponential? What defines a true innovator? These are some very hard questions, and their answers will vary dramatically depending on who is reading this. For us, it's a matter of culture. Culture defines the behaviors, practices and beliefs that a person holds dear. Culture defines what drives a person. That culture is born out of their values.

Our selection process is therefore values-based.

Values

Values show us how people will behave when no one is looking. How they will react in the face of hardship. An important distinction is that we're not looking just at people's potential to create value. We're looking for exponential people with a heart – that are driven by their will to give back. Here are our values, and their rationale.

Service

Service mindset is the value that enables the magic to happen and sits above the others. Great people tend to do great things in service of something larger than themselves. Their family, the problems they love, their God (or gods in lower case). Service is about humility, positive intent and doing the right thing. People with this mindset are coachable, build positive culture, and create healthy teams. They generate trust, which leads to impact.

Courage

Courage is about boldness and dreaming big. It's a value that drives action and hard work. It's the fuel to the rocketship. People who hold this value generate dynamic organizations where feedback is demanded and given with radical candor. They can solve conflicts effectively and take calculated but necessary risks, critical to create exponential returns.

Craft

This is a special one. Builder attitude. It's the value of the curious. They are pragmatic tinkerers, get things figured out and done - and they do it to fulfill their own pride. In other words, they are intrinsically self-motivated, they build for the love of building, without needing any incentive on top. People who hold this value create organizations that ship fast, continuously learn, and – frankly – that just have a lot of fun. They tend to be good at multiple disciplines, caring not just for technical aspects, but also keeping business, product and user dimensions front and center.

The beauty of these values is how they work together.

Service and courage without craft creates talkers, not doers. Courage and craft without service makes for lone wolves. Craft and service without courage renders submission. This is why each one is important.

Finally, it is not a coincidence that these values are the same we've used to create successful teams. It doesn't mean that these values are perfect — you can create exponential organizations with a more cutthroat or "shark" culture — but that's just not who we are.

Observations

Now that we understand these values, the question ahead is how to observe and identify them. How do we find the talent that believes in what we believe? The short answer is we don't know, and the truth is that — at times — we will fail. But the framework to find proxies for them is as follows:

Track record of excellence

It's a proxy for hard work, intellectual prowess and bias to action. A strong work ethic is nearly a guarantee in those with an academic or athletic (amongst others) success. It's a reflection of courage and ability.

Demonstrable building experience

If a person has built something in the past — a passion project, a blog, an app —, it's more than likely that they will continue to build throughout their lives. It helps identify builder attitude, team building skills, and intellectual curiosity.

Visible care for others

Honestly, this is the hardest one to see on paper. However, it's not so hard to read in interviews because it can be asked. People that care tend to be honest and humble. They possess the service mindset we are looking for.

The process is open to everyone, under strict criteria.