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**Slowing Down, Allowing Time To
Think, Can Be Exceedingly Valuable**



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Portfolio *Confidential*

Barbara Stewart

Real world confidential portfolio discussions:

I'd like to allocate a small portion of my overall portfolio to investing in startups. I want to put some of my money into businesses that are involved in causes that matter to me. Is equity crowdfunding a good way to accomplish this?

Crowdfunding platforms allow individual investors to access start-up investment opportunities that have traditionally only been available to venture and institutional investors. There are several platforms available in Canada but the one I found with the most diverse selection of stocks and funds is OurCrowd. Investors can pick and choose from 10-15 live deals at any given time and two to four different funds (although since inception there have been 220 different companies and over 20 funds). If you are interested in emerging spaces such as Ag-Tech, Food-Tech, or Med-Tech...this could be a great way to go. Or how about a pandemic innovation fund that invests in companies combating current and future pandemics?

Important note: This is a long term investment. Valuation is on a quarterly basis and there is no liquidity (e.g. no redemptions are possible) with equity crowdfunding. As an investor you are supporting the start-ups with your money and they are out spending your investment dollars. You will see a return of capital when there is a company event such as if they go public or if they get acquired. By way of example, the OurCrowd50 fund (50 different companies in diverse industries) started in 2017 and has enjoyed five exits out of 50 companies

so far and a 19.5% gross compound IRR (internal rate of return) from inception.

Jon Medved is the CEO of OurCrowd and based in Jerusalem. OurCrowd has offices all around the world, including Toronto. Medved is a serial entrepreneur and, according to the Washington Post, "one of Israel's leading high tech venture capitalists." He talked with me about how equity crowdfunding is helping my own favorite cause (gender equality):

"The OurCrowd investment platform attracts women into a financial arena that is otherwise exclusive. The fact that the platform enables the investors to pick and choose their deals, will also allow our investors, male and female alike, to apply preferential investment criteria and for example prioritize investing in female-led ventures. Inclusion of more women as decision makers in venture capital, specifically in investment committees, is progressing at a very slow pace. Much slower than we hope for. Same applies for the number of female founders of startups – a very slow progress, unfortunately.

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