

Famed Silicon Valley law firm Wilson Sonsini has launched a free tool that could save founders thousands in legal fees

Wilson Sonsini's website for its emerging-companies practice.

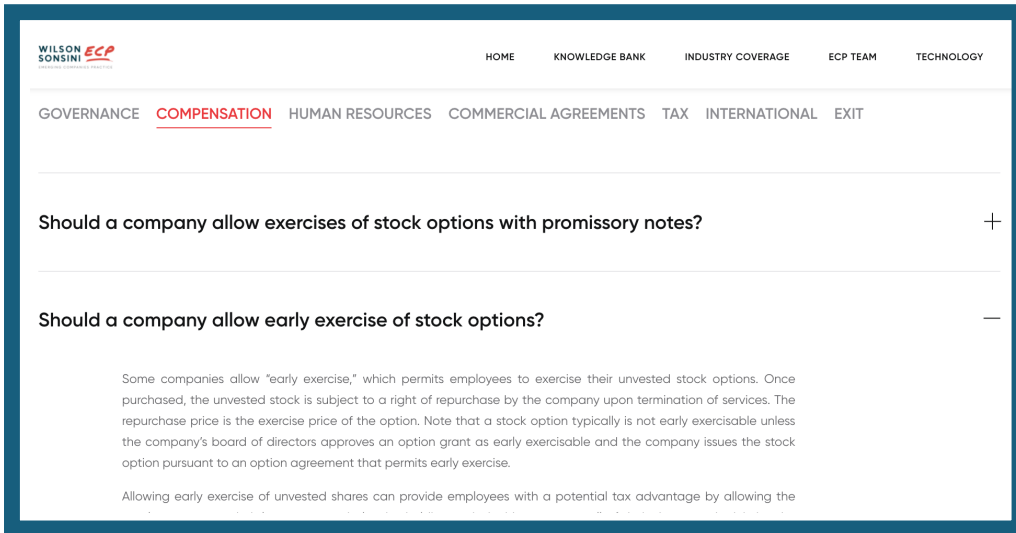
Melia Russell

- **Wilson Sonsini launched a website that answers 200 frequently asked questions by startup founders.**
- **It's written by some of the top legal minds from the firm and available for free.**
- **The digital hub could save founders time and money, Wilson Sonsini told Insider.**

One of the peculiarities of raising venture capital is that the startup tends to be on the hook for all legal fees, including its own lawyer and often the investor's counsel. This practice has recently come under scrutiny as unfair, even greedy.

But there's good news for founders.

Wilson Sonsini, a law firm preferred by tech startups, is seeking to attract new business by releasing a free online resource for entrepreneurs on how to run a company that could save them thousands of dollars in billable hours.



Wilson Sonsini's knowledge bank.

David Wang, Wilson Sonsini's chief innovation officer.

It's a website that answers more than 200 of the most frequently asked questions by founders, on topics from company formation and financing to human resources, taxes, and trade secrets, David Wang, the chief innovation officer at Wilson Sonsini, told Insider in an exclusive interview. The digital hub is written and updated by the some of the firm's top legal minds.

"The Knowledge Bank takes the concept of 'wiki' a bit further as it is curated and updated by experts in the field and made available, for free, to the startup community," Wang said in an email.

"A resource like this can help founders save time, money and potentially avoid costly mistakes," he added.

The website is also useful for venture capitalists who need to "stay on top of rapidly evolving areas of the law that can impact a business" in their firm's portfolio, Wang said. It will be updated frequently as rules and regulations change.

Wilson Sonsini often offers nuanced answers to the type of questions founders often have. Here's a sample:

- **Why should I incorporate as a Delaware corporation?**
- **What's the best structure to raise seed capital?**
- **Should a company allow early exercise of stock options?**
- **What agreements should a company have with its founders?**

Silicon Valley's law firm

Wang, who was an entrepreneur before becoming a lawyer, said he wanted the website to be "the first place a founder goes when starting a company." Already, the law firm is top of mind for generations of entrepreneurs and investors.

Wilson Sonsini has been shortlisted by startups for six decades, having represented tech titans such as Google, Apple, Netflix, Tesla, and Square before they went public. It's in Silicon Valley just on the other side of the Stanford University campus from Sand Hill Road, where some of the most illustrious venture-capital firms have offices.

The firm has been riding the tailwinds of a tech and life-sciences boom during the coronavirus pandemic. Last year, gross revenue grew to \$1.1 billion, climbing more than 17% from \$961 million the year prior, according to Law.com.

It also hired more than three dozen attorneys, including some boomerang employees.

Wilson Sonsini had several associates and paralegals leave for Atrium, the legal-tech startup founded by Justin Kan, before last year.

"They were primarily driven by the desire to see real changes in the industry, more quickly – many of which we were already pursuing internally, but in a more measured and evolutionary fashion," Wang said.

Atrium then let go of most of its in-house lawyers and later shut down. Several employees returned to Wilson Sonsini.

"I think they learned valuable lessons in what it really takes to make change happen, and I'm glad that those who have returned have brought that passion for technology-enabled client service back with them," Wang said.