

ZILKER MEDIA

About Mike Smerklo

Entrepreneur, Investor and Author of *Mr. Monkey and Me*



Mike Smerklo is an experienced entrepreneur, investor and business leader driven by the desire to turn ideas into reality. Having bought and scaled a small business into a publicly traded company worth nearly a billion dollars in value, he has a deep understanding of the hard work, dedication and grit that truly powers successful entrepreneurship. Today, as the co-founder and managing director of [Next Coast Ventures](#), Smerklo is a champion for a new generation of entrepreneurs building disruptive companies in big markets. His new book, ***Mr. Monkey and Me* (Scribe Media, Nov. 17 2020)**, is a “real talk” guide for entrepreneurs who want to cut through the noise to cultivate a mindset that supports greatness.

Smerklo grew up in a blue-collar family outside of Toledo, Ohio, with dreams of achieving something *more* with his life. After working his way through college to earn an accounting degree and moving to Chicago to launch his CPA career, he eventually talked his way into a junior analyst gig with the Wall Street investment bank Lehman Brothers. While he hated the job, surviving two years of hellish 100-hour workweeks and countless spreadsheets (*so many spreadsheets*) gave Smerklo a solid understanding of finance and company building. He went on to earn an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and experienced the Silicon Valley dot-com boom as an investment banker at Morgan Stanley.

Smerklo was recruited by legendary entrepreneurs Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz as one of the first employees of their new startup, Loudcloud. Here, he learned from the very best about what it takes to grow a company from an idea through an initial public offering. Smerklo began his own entrepreneurship journey in 2003, purchasing ServiceSource, a 30-person technology services startup in San Francisco. As CEO over the next 12 years, he grew the business into a successful 3,000-person publicly traded company with close to \$300M in revenue.

In *Mr. Monkey and Me*, Smerklo draws on his broad range of experiences and mistakes as an entrepreneur and venture capitalist. Using lessons he learned from renowned entrepreneurs, he developed the SHAPE formula -- Self, Help, Authenticity, Persistence and Expectations -- which gives readers an actionable approach to mental toughness that will help any entrepreneur start, grow and run a successful business. An anti-memoir, *Mr. Monkey and Me* features practical tools and the “other stuff” you don’t normally learn in classrooms or business books, such as the mental hurdles you have to overcome, the risks you have to take and the sacrifices and mistakes you’ll make to become a successful entrepreneur.

He has developed a new perspective on entrepreneurship at the helm of the Austin-based firm Next Coast Ventures, which has backed more than 40 companies across two funds to help startup founders achieve their goals. Mike and his wife spend the bulk of their free time chasing their four children. Visit www.mikesmerklo.com to read his blog and learn more.