

## **Rob Freelen Joins Sozo Ventures as a Managing Director**

Sozo Ventures is pleased to announce that Rob Freelen has joined the firm as a Managing Director and its fifth investment partner.

Prior to joining Sozo, Rob was an executive and 17-year veteran at Silicon Valley Bank. Most recently, he was Head of VC Relationship Management, serving as an advisor to SVB Capital's Fund-of-Funds and primary relationship manager for many of the most active US Venture firms, including A16Z, Sequoia, Emergence and Felicis.

"We are very lucky to have Rob joining the Sozo family," says Sozo co-founder Kohichro Nakamura. "The firm is at an exciting inflection point, and Rob will play a critical role in our next chapter."

Rob started at Silicon Valley Bank in 2005, and helped build it into an industry leader. "My time at SVB was incredible—we built the organization from a great regional bank into the leading financial services firm for the innovation economy. SVB is an amazing company with tremendously broad influence across the innovation economy. What drew me to Sozo was the depth of their expertise in Japan and their approach to helping the best technology companies expand globally. I'm excited to be a part of Sozo's next chapter as we continue building the bridge between the US and Asia, with a focus on Japan."

Rob is part of a rapid expansion of Sozo in both size and ambition, says co-founder Phil Wickham. "Over 11 years ago, Koh and I set out to build a different kind of VC firm. During that time we have grown to over \$1B under management and helped more than 40 companies expand globally. I'm awed and humbled by those numbers, but I know that the best measure of our success—and the main driver behind it—is the incredible team we have assembled. That's why I'm thrilled Rob has agreed to join us, as he will accelerate our already incredible momentum."

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