Stanford eCorner

Building Internal Culture

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Thuuz Co-Founder and CEO Warren Packard articulates his company's effort to build an internal culture. Among numerous factors playing an impact, Packard identifies how generational difference between employees is at the forefront of their cultural development.

Transcript

The story I guess that I'll tell around that is one going back to - or going forward, fast forwarding to Thuuz because right now, as we think about culture, we're struggling with: how do you put a culture into a company? What should that culture be? And how is it different from other cultures that are out there and what we want to actually end up doing? And one of the interesting things about our company that differs from Facebook or other companies that are started by younger individuals is we're an old company.. We got guys like me that are there.. So, it was founded by - a few 40 year-olds there.. And the question is, like, what happens when we start diversifying this population because, A, diversity is key for us not having groupthink and getting more ideas and having - just all sorts of things as you guys know.. But how do we attract folks that are out of college that want to, I don't know, work from 11 in the morning to 1 in the morning? And how did they put up with the fact that we have kids and we actually work from this time to this time and we want to go home and have dinner with them and then we want to work on a PC at home? It's something actually, this is a real uncertainty, it's a real tension.. But it's not something we could plan out.. Again, chance would have it that we started a company when we were not 20 years-old.. And then the other question that occurred to us is, like, are we going to be advantaged because we've got all this experience or we are going to be disadvantaged because we actually already know something we shouldn't do and it's actually that childlike curiosity I don't means that allows you to do things that other simply won't do.. Are we going to be just too planned and perfect, again, not to take that to an extent, but planned and perfect and we're going to miss the cool opportunities whereas those who were more youthful will just, yeah, I'm going to do that.. If I think about Napster, I mean Napster got in a ton of trouble for what they did, but it was the start of a revolution in the home music business, pretty amazing what they did, and a lot of the things they did because they didn't know better, they didn't know otherwise..

So, there is a tension there.. Again, there is no right answers, there is no wrong answer, but we're getting more and more younger individuals into the company and it's absolutely fantastic because that is a skill set that we need, but we've to think about culture, how do you bridge a culture when, again, there is different work habits and different work styles, again, no answer, I'm not coming with that, but obviously I guess underpinning all of this is there isn't absolutely no doubt that having this diversity within the company is going to make us absolutely much stronger organization...