URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/improving-vs-preserving-culture

"The correct question is not how do you keep a culture from changing, it's what culture do you want to have, and how do you get there," says John Collison, co-founder and president of the online payment system Stripe. He discusses how his startup began with a culture of immediate action but grew over time to be more methodical and metrics driven.

Transcript

People often ask the question like how do you keep the culture from changing and I guess to me that question suggests a huge amount of hubris in that to suggest that initial kernel of culture that you had is the perfect culture that any company could have and does not deserve any improving, yes, something seems off there.. And so, the correct question is not how do you keep the culture from changing? It's what culture do you want to have and how do you get there? And sometimes you will believe that you have that culture already and you want to - you want to teach new hires that.. But I think often times it will - if you are being really thoughtful about it is about recognizing a deficiency in your culture and how do we inculcate that.. And I think I can identify various points throughout the history of Stripe where the culture actually improved from someone coming in and them bringing in some new culture with them, as an example of this, I think in the early days start-ups tend to be very fly by night, shoot from the hip, not at all metrics driven and maybe that's necessary in that maybe you need to have a clear idea of where you're going and ignore the data to some degree.. But it's really important as they grow to become more metrics-oriented and actually look at usage, look at how people are using the products and bake that into future product development.. And we've definitely started off, not very metrics driven and we've become much more metrics driven over time.. And I think that that was a good example of a concrete place I can identify the culture as having improved...