

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/maintaining-cohesiveness-at-scale>

Zillow Group Co-Founder Rich Barton talks about processes that startups must put in place as their workforce grows into the hundreds. Despite their bureaucratic reputation, certain practices that maintain a clarity of mission and culture of collegiality are critical for larger companies in order for them to stay driven and focused on success, according to Barton, the co-founder of Expedia, Glassdoor and the Zillow Group of real-estate sites.



## Transcript

- One of the levers I have as a leader at my disposal to build a culture of innovation, and trust, and respect, and success I'll append to that.. The first one is the people find.. You gotta get in with the right people.. And so when you're small, the people point never goes away.. It's really important.. But when you're small, you know everybody.. And so a lot of the more Dilbert processes, big company processes, they don't come into play necessarily when you have a small team of people.. It's when you pass the dunbar unit of 150 people, or there about, when you can note you as the CEO, you as the engineer, you as the HR person, can't possible know everybody and know everything that's going on.. And now you need to put in place what younger people might view as bureaucratic or Dilbert.... You guys know what Dilbert is, right? Anyway, like joking at big companies' processes and infrastructure in place..

And part of that is laying out a really well-defined mission, talking about values, and then actually living those values in the company and reinforcing that on every possible chance you have to communicate.. And so, the CEO at Ziller Group is guy named Spencer Rascoff who is just unbelievable.. And he has his mission thing that everybody says before every meeting and he has the six values of the company.. Stuff like, "Move fast, think big".. And those are blazoned on the walls and those pervade his communications.. That is one technique and if it's abided by, it works really really well.. Another one that I actually liked that's kinda Dilberty as well, is that everybody does this fun personality test, at Ziller group at least.. And ever company has some different mechanism.. And the personality test ends up.... It's kinda fun..

Everybody likes to answer a bunch of questions about themselves and be told why they're so special and different.. And it turns out that no matter what your strengths are it's special and different in additive, which is true.. It turns out, a diversity of personality is really important in a corporate environment.. And those things are translated into a series of colored bricks that sit on people's desks at Ziller Group.. And if it's red on top that means this person leads with red energy, they're competitive.. They wanna be told things quickly and then get out of my face.. But then there are the people that have the green brick on top, which are they just wanna get along.. They want everybody to get along with each other and cooperate.. It's a really interesting mechanism I found for people who are clashing with other people to look at their personality profile and say, "Oh yeah, okay Amy is a green on top person.. "So I'm gonna have to actually behave a little differently"..

These are silly sounding, corporate sounding things that are really important as companies get big...