



Stanford eCorner

Entrepreneurs Must Have Drive and Perseverance to Be Successful

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Gordon discusses companies he believes exemplify outstanding drive and perseverance. Apple has tremendous creativity that has paid off with the success of the iPod. Oracle is extremely dedicated to its vision and has surmounted obstacles in order to achieve it. Intuit has a relentless commitment to the customer that has led the company through tough times.



Transcript

Drive in perseverance. Here are four examples of incredible driver in perseverance: Apple. It goes without saying. I think this is a company that had tremendous creativity, fought hard against first of all a conventional computers then a new competitor, IBM. The famous ad in the Wall Street Journal where Apple put about a full-page ad on the daily IBM PC was announced and it said welcome, IBM, to the personal computer industry, seriously. That kind of perseverance today with creativity with iPod and so forth they offered in the company. Unshakeable conviction that will work. I worked a great deal with Oracle and Larry Ellison in the early days. The vision there was the vision that you could have a relational database that worked equally well across all hardware platforms and IBM was doing DB2 on IBM but everybody else needed a Unix version and so forth. It was more Larry Ellison's will that it be done than any creative genius.

He just said it can be done. We'll develop a working relational database that is truly cross platform and eventually they did and they sold it and convinced people that that was the mission and it worked. Meticulous attention to details probably is best exemplified by Apple where Steve Jobs' brilliant industrial design of everything that Apple ever touched down to the point of exactly which type of fonts to choose for the Macintosh or what colors to choose for the iMac. Steve Jobs today still involves himself intricately in those decisions and he's got a flare for it. Relentless commitment to the customer. This is probably best exemplified by Intuit where Scott Cook had his training at Procter and Gamble where it was all about the consumer. There's a book that was just published called Inside Intuit. How many of you have seen it? I commend it to you. It's a very interesting book. I've had an association with Intuit since 1991.

Every part that I know is accurately reflected in the book. It's not always true in some of these startup books. It tells about some of the tough times where the company literally was financed from Scott Cook's bank credit card a couple of times where people were not paid for months at a time. The entire company got together to ship the first product. It's just one of the stories. Probably the most wonderful part for a Stanford student is Scott came with this idea of doing an electronic checkbook but Scott was not technical and all and was not from Stanford. He was from SC and Harvard. He didn't know the Stanford the campus so he was wandering around with an index card to put up on a bulletin board somewhere and he found a kiosk in White Plaza and he asked the first student who passed by, where would be a good place to advertise for a program or to support a company I want to start? And Tom Proulx, a young engineering student said let me look at that and said you don't need to post this at all, I'll take the job. That's how Tom Proulx became a cofounder with Scott Cook of Intuit and wrote the first version of Quicken. So

keep your head up as you're walking around campus.