



Stanford eCorner

Game Plan at LRK

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1519/Game-Plan-at-LRK>

Frank shares the game plan they have adopted at their architectural firm.



Transcript

Our game plan besides lasting a year was, we did, this was one thing we talked about a lot over the pizza and beer. We said if it worked, we got to have a strong team build a really strong team, and very thoughtfully build the team because we knew that made the difference from the places we had worked in the past. When the team was not strong and not composed properly, it created problems and weaknesses that we thought would undermine our success. We wanted to share responsibility not just between the three of us but that was part of it but with anyone that was in the firm. We wanted to push down and to let people grow up. We said we want to share information. A lot of firms and a lot of firms still do this particularly in architectural business, they don't share with the staff financial information, contractual information. They just sort of give them pieces of work and they do it and they give it back. And we, we never thought that was a good thing and we said we're not going to do it. So basically we share everything there is to know except for personal salaries and bonuses.

If anybody say anything we put reports out. Every bit of our business is open to the entire staff. We also said we're going to share profit. We said if we're going to expect these things out of people that work with us, the team that we're building, we have to share the reward because we felt like that would sustain the firm because again that was part of the reason we were leaving the places that we had been employed. We knew we were making things happen there but we didn't see the return on it. We wanted to share ownership. Not just share the profit but literally have people invested and say they're an owner. They own stock in the firm because I believe owners act differently than non-owners. In particular in a service business. We don't make anything.

All we have are designers to offer because we don't produce contractors who build buildings, architects design them. So all of we've got is what's between the ears of everybody in our firm and so we wanted that ownership level because we think that makes a difference and we're not, you know that's all we're selling is that intellectual capital and I believe the owners respond differently to situations. And then the last one, which is actually perhaps most important but these others are fundamental underneath the operation of our firm but we wanted to do really good work. If we couldn't find the right kind of work and we couldn't build the right kind of team, then we didn't want to be in business. It was important to us not to just have a business and make money. It was to do really good work and to continually to advance the work that we did and in essence make better places.