



Stanford eCorner

Mission Statement and Culture Transfer

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1521/Mission-Statement-and-Culture-Transfer>

Frank describes the mission statement and the principles they follow at LRK Architecture. He goes on to talk about the issue of perpetuating the company's culture as the company grows.



Transcript

You know, you read the books and it says, OK if you're going to start a business, you got to have the mission statement but it was years before we had a mission statement and we had some people internally trying to help write it, it always came across as this marketing thing and so I resisted. We don't have titles, we didn't have mission statements and we still don't really have mission statement. But this was the first thing that we ever came up with that everyone agreed, all principals agreed. That's what we're about. We're in business to design and I think an advise to you if you're thinking of starting a business or helping one grow is to be real clear about you're in business for. So the number one thing that we're in business for is to design. We want to make money, it's not profit, it's not other stuff. It's about we want the opportunity to design and we can elaborate and say it's good. We want to do good projects and all that but it's just simply to design. That's what drives us to create things.

And certainly the second one, we want to do really good work and we built our firm really on the issue of practice, practicing good service to the clients because they do have a choice. Because we're not selling products, we're selling services, which is a different such a different animal than perhaps some of the speakers you've heard from where some thing is created and then it's marketed and sold, we're selling service. And then we aspire to be a place where everyone in our firm can seek their potential. Not everyone is going to be a principal in the firm but we want them to go wherever they can seek their spot. And we can't always have a spot for everyone, but that's our goal. As for, as your companies grow, there's an issue of culture transfer. When there are ten people in an office that's smaller than this auditorium, you don't have to write this stuff down. Everyone hears it, they feel it, they breathe it. You know, it's just in the room. When you grow outside, you know, of more than about 20 people, in my mind you start having this issue of how do you perpetuate the culture.

What are you in business for? What matters? How do I make a decision? You know, how do you, if we're all working together how do you make a decision that you think is in sync with me? All those things become amplified and then when you start another office, you have another location, it goes up exponentially. And so right now for me as managing principal, one of the toughest things that I have to do is try to figure out to perpetuate the culture that made successful because we're pretty confident that what we figure out how to do works. Our clients tell us it works.