



Stanford eCorner

Managing a Technology-Driven Company

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February 01, 2006

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1403/Managing-a-Technology-Driven-Company>

Fraser discusses her experience as a non-technical person heading a technology driven company. She strongly believes that every manager should be able to lead people who are unlike them to have a successful company.



Transcript

So what has prepared me to manage technology of a company. I have been in a high tech field for, I don't know, since 1990. So, almost 16 years. I'm feeling old. So I've been near technology a lot. I've listened to a lot of really smart technology people and I have no shame in making people talk to me like I'm in kindergarten. So I honestly will be in a conference room and will stop the conversation and say, I don't understand and it seems like it's important. Could you please draw me some pictures and explain that to me in layman's terms? And I try not to do that in a way that it's disruptive but I'm tried to do that so I that I understand what I need to understand to make appropriate decision. So it's that. Another thing is that I believe that it's possible to lead people who are unlike you and I believe that so strongly that I would say that it is mandatory that every manager be able to lead people who are unlike them.

Otherwise, you don't have a company. A company that is full of technology people will have terrible bookkeeping. A company that is full technology people will not know how to talk about that technology, right? So I have to work with people who know things that are completely unlike the things that I know and I do that every day and we hire people explicitly for that reason. So I think that if you want to be a leader, if you want to be an entrepreneur and make code, that's brilliant. But if you want to be the entrepreneur that helps pull the whole thing together and kind of keep all these moving parts working in concert toward the shared common goal, you have to be able to kind of jump in and swim no matter what the conversation is. And that means having no ego about what you know and don't know. You just know it, you don't know it and you ask a lot questions.