



Stanford eCorner

Don't Kill Projects; Morph Them

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May 17, 2006

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1532/Dont-Kill-Projects-Morph-Them>

Repackage, rejuvenate, re-market, and re-examine those products or practices you thought would fly, and craft them a new set of wings. Vice President of Search Products & User Experience, Marissa Mayer lives by the old adage that if at first you don't succeed, try again. She pushes aspiring business thinkers to breathe new life into failed ventures, as opposed to cutting the cord.



Transcript

Don't kill projects, morph them. And this is, I think, a really interesting and antithetical idea that came from Eric, so once we were analyzing which projects and which products on our site worked really well and which ones, you know, seemed to be faltering, and Eric said to me, "Well, what are you going to do about some of these projects that don't seem to be showing the growth trends that they should be showing?" And I said, "Well, I'm not sure. You know, maybe we should try and rejuvenate them, maybe we should just cancel them, maybe we should, you know, sort of pull them back into the shop and let them work for a while, but not have them be quite so prominent until they've gotten fixed." And he said, "Don't kill projects, morph them." In an environment like Google, where we have really smart people, if an idea has actually managed to make it out the door, I mean, there's a real product there, and there's a lot of people working on it, usually there's some kernel of truth in it. There is something interesting and innovative in that space, and it may be that the way we packaged it or the way we implemented it isn't quite right, but it's important to recognize that that really smart, talented person got interested and excited about this for a reason, and there's probably something that you can do to ultimately make it successful. And I think it's really interesting to think about, you know, not walking away from ideas but instead trying to figure out how to re-package them and how to rejuvenate them. Like some ideas that we all have are just, you know, twaddle, and they should just be discarded as quickly as they came into your head, but I think the idea here is once something has taken on the full life of a project, right, and there's, you know, engineers working on it, there's PMs working on it, there's UI designers working on it, there's a reason it built up that much momentum and that much interest, and there's a reason why so many smart people have spent so much of their time, energy and passion working on this, so just don't walk away from it because it's faltering. Have respect for the fact that there's something interesting there. So I agree like, you know, you can't say every idea is a good idea, but to the point where once it's gotten filtered and it's gotten, you know, life and legs of its own it makes sense to really examine that before killing it.