



Stanford eCorner

Setting a Company Culture

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2232/Setting-a-Company-Culture>

What does your company stand for? How will you make decisions? What are your overall philosophies? These questions are easy enough to answer when the company is three friends sitting in a living room, but how are they defined for a burgeoning business? Mari Baker, CEO of PlayFirst, urges companies at a turning point to put forth concentrated effort to define and pinpoint these policies and ideals, and to otherwise define a culture that can grow along with your product line. She cites as an example a two-day offsite meeting at Intuit when they'd bulked up their staff to 30 people, and the positive results that ensued.



Transcript

As Intuit grew, the other piece that I want to encourage all of you to think about - especially if you're going to go out and start a company or get involved in a company early on - is coming back to that focus on setting a culture in the company what you want it to be. The reason when it's small, when there's you and three of your friends in a room, well you chose them, they're your friends so you're doing this together, there's sort of a self-defining culture. But as a company starts to get bigger, you need to be very clear about what it is that you want the company to stand for and how it's going to make decisions and what your philosophies are. At Intuit, we actually shut down the whole company for two days, took everybody offsite, worked on vision, mission, values, and it was a defining moment in the company's history that allowed it to grow and continue to move forward. This last week, I had the opportunity to have lunch with a founder of what right now is a very hot company, a small company still but I think will be in the news a lot over the next 12 months in the Valley. These were questions that as the company had very quickly gone from 10 people to 50 people to 100 people in a matter of just a few months, they were starting to see the company burst at the seams because of a lack of really understanding those things. It's really important because how do you know when you hire somebody in, are they going to be consistent with what you believe in, with how you want to create and grow your company? It's an important piece to make sure it's paid attention to early on and that you focus on doing.