



Stanford eCorner

Testing and Metrics are Imperative

Mark Pincus, Zynga

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Pilots that fly by vision alone have a very short life expectancy when passing through clouds. But pilots that fly utilizing their instruments are able to soar. Mark Pincus, CEO of game company Zynga, and Bing Gordon, partner at VC firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, touch upon the importance of metrics and analysis in social networking. In fact, Pincus states that one of his biggest career regrets from Tribe.net was not testing and measuring enough new tools and strategy. Gordon sums up the lesson for entrepreneurs by stating that we should, "believe in Darwinism, not Intelligent Design."



Transcript

Mark Pincus: The biggest lesson that I've gotten is about testing. It's about set high goals and then test and build. Assume that you're going to get it wrong. And build this leveraged approach. What I know now that I didn't get then was Tribe - if I could do it all over again, I would have made Tribe initially a platform to test many ideas of social networking. So, we try just one. Oh my god, like what the hell was I thinking? I mean, just one? I mean, we test at our company, we have several hundred test going on everyday and in every game. And what I would have done is made Tribe a platform to test every configuration because that's what's so beautiful about the consumer Internet is that it is about repeatable formulas. And once you find a formula that works, it seem to stay that way forever or it doesn't seem to break for a long, long time. So, the biggest one would have been testing and then the CEO part wouldn't have mattered because Tribe was not going to be a big company if I didn't get the first part right.

Host: OK. Thank you. Bing Gordon: In general, Mark is saying is believe in Darwin, don't believe in intelligent design. Mark Pincus: Well, I'm a pilot and the rule of thumb is that if you are a visual flight pilot and you fly in the clouds, you're life expectancy is 180 seconds. Because you need to learn how to fly by instruments and that's what matrix and data are about on the modern Internet. If you're going to bring a consumer product to market, you might as well not change it at all if you're not going to measure the impact of that change. It's just a waste.