Stanford eCorner

Customer Feedback Tied to Product Development

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"Get out of the building and actually watch [customers] use the product," says Jessica Mah, on the subject of customer feedback. Mah believes in-person customer meetings provide high-quality feedback that cannot be easily obtained through online testing. The inDinero co-founder also addresses the challenges in not adding features, even when specifically requested by customers.

Transcript

So to your first question, I'd say the main process is get out of the building and actually watch them in person use the products. So, we didn't have any fancy software or process. It was just e-mail them and say, hey, I want to figure out how you're using InDinero and how you could make it better. Can we meet up in person over coffee? And a lot of our customers are in San Francisco or in New York and I live in New York, well my parents do, so I get the best of both. And that's always been the best way. The least successful learning we have is on the phone actually. We can't watch them use the product, we can't watch them struggle, and that's just not as useful. Your second question was about paying customers who want a feature and we've had to turn them away. And we get then quite a bit. We have people who want us to build a feature that would make us too much like an accounting product all the time.

And we just have to tell them, remind them that they signed up for InDinero because they wanted simplicity and InDinero gives them that simplicity and we can't just build everything for them. But we found out that a lot of our customers do ask for valid features and it's not that we won't build them but it's that it'll take us three to six months to get around to it and that's the more difficult scenario. But we found that most of them are pretty patient. They're willing to wait for us to catch up because they believe in the company. So who is the product steering committee in InDinero? Well, it's all of us. Okay. Like, it's not really like we vote on features, it's just we talk about it over dinner once a week. We'll take the company out to eat at a restaurant and we'll go over the problems that customers had, and then based on that we'll just decide alright that sounds interesting I'll work on that. And was there ever a time so far that you've heard enough requests in a place you weren't planning to go where all of a sudden it was clear that you needed to make a shift in this area or has that not happened yet? Yeah. I'd say the biggest example of that is with building a mobile application.

I never really thought strongly about going mobile because I thought that every web startup was just building an iOS or Android app because that was the cool thing to do. But, a lot of our customers expect that and demand that so that kind of brought us on to a different course.