



Stanford eCorner

Attitude and Approach to Innovation

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3045/Attitude-and-Approach-to-Innovation>

GE healthymagination CEO Sue Siegel explains why attitude and behavior are important to affect change in organizations. Siegel also says you can create room for innovative work in an organization by starting new things that the company is currently not doing.



Transcript

The other question I suspect you ask is how do you actually affect change in whatever environment that you are in. so, knowing that, let's go through that a little bit, and we can't see right now is regardless of what size company you still have to do the same sort of elements, build teams, work within teams, if you are leading you need to hire, you also need to fire, a lot of people forget that portion of it, and I'll tell you some of the best decisions that some of the best leaders have made have been to fire people because you have to set the expectation with regards to what you want in terms of quality and what you expect in terms of delivery. The other element of it is attitude, and I know this is going to sound like, well, my mamma taught me that. But, I have to tell you a lot of times the soft skills I was talking about; no matter if you are in a small company or in a big company, the decisions don't get made by like big huge committees in terms of you. Typically the decision gets made by your next manager or by your manger's manager with the manager, depends on the size of the company. But, it tells you a lot about your attitude, your willingness to actually participate in things, your willingness to actually be part of the solution versus just the problem and that is something that regardless of size, you go through. Now, let me just mention something about innovation for a second, and how that works in the size of companies, and the reason why I say this is, I think it's pretty important as you think about where you go, this university in particular has been all around innovation, it just embraces the whole notion of creativity and entrepreneurship, it embraces the notion of bringing whatever sized company that certainly has stimulated the creativity of all the startups, which now - some of the ones that are biggest, and it's hard to actually tell them this, because when you think about the likes of Intel and what not, some of the first venture-backed companies they are middle-aged or older, right, they are no longer the big start up. But that's - they started that way too. Google, Google is getting - they are more than teenage years, right? They are getting into their 30s - 20s and 30s, right? So when you start to think about that the whole change with regards to where you want to go and where you are trying to seek out what you are looking for has been important. For me, fundamentally, innovation has been the important element.

What I saw through my career, and what I have really enjoyed from the very beginning, be it when I was in academics, be it when I went to big or small companies, is regardless of where I was, I found a way to surround myself with innovative processes, with innovation in terms of technology, with people who are very, very creative, and to almost always start something that was different from what the rest of the organization was doing, and then it didn't matter what size company I was at.