



Stanford eCorner

Uncertainty and Accountability

Sue Siegel, *GE*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3046/Uncertainty-and-Accountability>

Sue Siegel, CEO of GE healthymagination, discusses balancing uncertainty with accountability in startups and large organizations. If unable to discover an answer, says Siegel, she will force one or eventually decide to move on from an organization.



Transcript

So the question he is asking is how do you marry up uncertainty and accountability. And almost in any sized company by the way, because I'll tell you in the startup world when you are getting to a point where in fact you're running out of money and there is an uncertainty of whether you're going to get funded or not, that uncertainty is pressure and your accountability is even higher, because it's all about survival, okay. In the big company, the uncertainty is, do I get the allocation, don't I get the allocation, is this project going to survive, is it not going to survive. The pressure is a little different, no doubt about it. But, how do they co-exist, it's a great question and I don't think I have a clear answer that just goes magically, but I will tell you what I do when I have uncertainty in any sized company that I've been at, and that's I force an answer. And if I can't get an answer, I force it myself. And it's happened or I leave. There comes times when you decide it's time. You know, of the seven companies I've been - with organizations I've been with, I will tell you, I have only left one, because I wanted to. All the other ones doors opened and it was time to go, okay, and I walked through those doors.

I left one, and I'm not going to tell you which one it was, but I will tell you it's because the uncertainty was so big and they just couldn't figure out what they wanted to do, but it was time to go.