



Stanford eCorner

All That Matters

Mike Olson, *Cloudera*

November 13, 2013

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3231/All-That-Matters>

According to Cloudera Co-Founder Mike Olson, the quality of the people in the organization is really all that matters. Olson talks about who he looks to work with and his lack of interest in being the 'A' player on a 'B' team.



Transcript

I'll talk both about Sleepycat, but even more about Cloudera. The quality of the people in the organization that's really all that matters. In my view everything that we can claim as a success ties to the fact that we have recruited the world's best team and say that right out loud in front of everybody, I think we have been fantastically successful in recruiting a world-class organization including just lights out fantastic developers. We have a very deep and careful process for sourcing and filling, sourcing candidates and filling positions and we interview not just for skills, we interview for capacity to learn, because the market is changing and we've got to get better as time goes by. I'm also really - when we are hiring people in the company, I'm looking for people with multiple diverse interests, not just I am a fantastic C++ coder, but I'm a fantastic C++ coder who has summited five of the nine highest peaks on the planet. Someone who does that has a suppleness of mind that you want. They chase tough challenges and you can rely on them to be interesting. One reason I do that is I spent a lot of time on the road and I travel with a bunch of business colleagues. After five days of 10 hours of customer meetings, on Friday evening when you're sitting down over a beer after that week, you want to talk about something and by God it's not work. So this - the summited five mountains guy, you can talk to that person.

Anyway, we look for diversity and intelligence and flexibility in the people that we hire and I will say, I think we have been pretty successful. It's what makes Cloudera such an exciting place to work and if you're good at hiring that way early, it's easy to keep it up. If you don't do that early, it's impossible to change it. The reason is really great people gravitationally attract really great people. Who wants to go join a B team and be like the A person? Yes, I got better things to do, but you walk in, you think you are the smartest kid in the class; actually you guys had this experience coming to Stanford. Wherever you went to high school you were the geniuses right. You show up here, you're not even the smartest person in your row. That's a good place to be. That's a good place to be.