



Stanford eCorner

The Value of Learning How to Sell

Halle Tecco, *Rock Health*

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Rock Health CEO Halle Tecco talks about the early commitment to start an idea as a student. In conversation with Stanford Professor Tom Byers, Tecco also talks about career skills she learned in previous roles, including the soft skills of office environments and the indispensable value of learning how to sell.



Transcript

You kind of have rose color glasses on, when I look back and it's like oh yeah I always knew it was going to work out. But to be honest, I mean, there were a good six months that I was talking to my husband every night, crying, thinking it wasn't going to work out. Because there is a point where you really have to -- when you're in school you kind of have to toy around and work as though it's going to happen, but then you have this safety net of if it doesn't happen, you graduate and get a real job. So being a student is a great time to start a company. It's totally de-risked for you. But there is a point where you're coming upon graduation and you have to decide really to jump in or not. And I got a lot of positive signals from early supporters of Rock Health including the Mayo Clinic which was kind of our first partner, but it really - there were probably a good six months where I didn't think I was able to pull it together and you just have to kind of pretend like its going to work out and pull everyone into following you, cross your fingers. We hear this over and over - you know, in this speaker series and in all our other courses, we hear this notion of tenacity over and over again. And that's still the case even in this generation of entrepreneurs. I remember meeting you at that Harvard Business School advisory Council out here, you had just been flying, doing red-eyes every week, something like that, for months, something like that.

Yes. So that was grad school though. So going back, you worked at Intel and Apple, I mean two technology giants. So those are - but they're big companies. What experiences or skills from working there are you using now? That's a good question. You know, as a CEO yourself. I would say there is just this like learning how to work, it's just so different from school, having to just do the same thing day in and day out and having a manager that you have to keep happy and understanding politics within a workplace. So there are those kind of soft skills that you don't learn in school at all. Learning how to sell, I think that's a really - I actually never even learned that at Intel, I learned that when I worked at Nordstrom in college, but learning to sell is like one of the best skills you can have, like it just pays so well. As an entrepreneur, if you can sell, you're always selling.

You're selling new employees, you're selling investors, you're selling your customers and if you can learn how to understand customers and serve customers and you can learn that at a low-stakes job at Starbucks or in retail, I would suggest doing that because that was probably where I learned the most.