



## Stanford eCorner

### Slow Down and Spread Mindset

Bob Sutton, *Stanford University*

February 12, 2014

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3273/Slow-Down-and-Spread-Mindset>

Stanford Professor Bob Sutton discusses why effective scaling involves knowing when to hit the brakes, so you can accelerate faster. Sutton, co-author of *Scaling Up Excellence*, illustrates this point with hiring and on-boarding examples from Facebook and Google.



#### Transcript

So our core message is when we see something good, at least that seems good to us spread, the people who scale badly and this is classic in start-ups, they get so focused on running up the numbers that they don't realize that in the process what they really need to do is to slow down and spread behaviors and beliefs, we call this a mindset that sort of are in everybody's brain that propel scaling and we would argue that a hallmark of effective scaling is essentially as Huggy puts it, people know where to hit the brakes so they can accelerate faster later and Huggy has got this new line that the great thing about brakes is it means you can drive even faster and it's kind of the same with scaling. I was just with Huggy at Google yesterday doing a talk and Google is a really great place you can go back to even 2002, I remember interviewing Larry Page and he talked about how pissed everybody was at him - the venture capitalists, his fellow employees and also Stanford students because he wasn't hiring them fast enough, but it turns out that focusing on hiring the right people was very important to Google's growth. Another example Facebook with we've had intermittent contact with the folks at Facebook since the earliest days of the d.school when a woman named Kay Deermander who was then head of product, she used to come and hire our students from the d.school. In fact the other day I sent an e-mail because she saw that our book came out and she gave me a list of four or five people she sort of just hired right out of our class, I sort of forgot about that. But we've been following them for a long time and the guy we talk to in particular is the guy named Chris Cox another famous Stanford dropout, he actually finished his undergraduate degree and dropped out of Symbolic Systems. Chris Cox has now had a product and in talking to Chris and other folks like Mike Schroepfer who is the CTO, they described to us and we also talked to a lot of the other engineers that at Facebook when they hire a new engineer because getting the mindset in people is so important, when you're hired before they assign you to a job what they have you do is they have you do 12 or 13 small projects and we have all heard probably most of us about the Move Fast and Break Things mindset. The idea here is you actually live it and when we had Mike Schroepfer and Chris Cox as guests in our class, I said to Chris Cox what's a good first week at Facebook and he said you've made a change in the code that you can show to your mother or father like a new pull down menu, maybe higher resolution on a picture and that's sort of this notion that we see over and over again that when firms scale effectively they think about the mindset not just the footprint as Huggy would put it.