



## Stanford eCorner

### Defining Culture Around the People

Julia Hartz, *Eventbrite*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3378/Defining-Culture-Around-the-People>

Eventbrite Co-Founder and President Julia Hartz explains how a business's employees should reflect its product and the importance of "grit" and a can-do spirit. She also says a company's culture should be based on team-wide values in order for it to be a sustainable and centering force going forward.



#### Transcript

And I did some sort of soul-searching around what kind of culture we wanted to create, what kind of culture we had at a team of 30. We were doing our first branding exercise at the same time as I was doing this soul-searching and we asked our customers to define or use words to describe Eventbrite the service. And they came back with words like accessible, genuine, delightful, innovative, empowering. When I looked at that list, I realized it actually described the team of 30 and that how cool that was that the two were intrinsically linked. The people should reflect the product and vice versa. So instead of reinventing the wheel and trying to come up with like core values or a mission statement or just ripping off Zappos I really kind of defined our culture tenets around that and we used that list to start hiring. So we looked for skills and impact this list of culture tenets and then this -the sort of four thing that I had identified in our group which basically we call it the make it happen spirit. But I will define it in a easier way, its grit. So it's really that ability to stretch far enough to make something happen and to give back to your community, whether it be your team, our product, our company, or the customers. So that's kind of where I started and I realized that I wanted to create a sustainable culture.

And it dawned on me really early on that -in order to create a sustainable culture, the culture could not be defined by one person or one group of people. It had to be defined by everybody. And so a lot of that first year was just me sitting back and observing and then finding moments where I could provide a resource or a tailwind or encouragement to somebody who was giving back to our culture and that's how we started to create that sustainability, because if you think about culture . The word is just beaten to death, I mean overused in -I don't even know what it means anymore, but if you think about culture, it keeps you centered. It should be that centering force for the company and for the team. So no matter how good things get and no matter how bad things get. Ultimately, if you create a sustainable culture, you should be able to stay in that center place and so as we've created this sustainable culture that's really a manifestation of every single Briteling, good or bad, if we make hiring mistakes, we see it in our culture. I want that to happen, I want that mirror to happen. We really are building this bank of trust and so I value the bank of trust when we have to debit from it and deliver bad news we quickly credit it. But I think it's all about that center place and that trust and sustainability.

And so it's a work in progress. Somebody mentioned oh, one day we should write a book about our culture and I really hope that doesn't happen because I never want this to be over, I never want it to be in a place where I have clearly figured it out because I love to keep learning and I think that we're a work in progress.