



Stanford eCorner

Knowing Your Leadership Role

Lewis Cirne, *New Relic*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3402/Knowing-Your-Leadership-Role>

Lew Cirne, founder and CEO of New Relic, describes how he came to realize that he doesn't need to be involved in all aspects of a company. Learning this after founding his first startup, Cirne says he now recruits senior leaders who can focus on the aspects of the business that he can't.



Transcript

So I think the biggest change for me personally was my first time around I really felt compelled as CEO to be more of a domain expert in everything and to - in effect try to be someone I am not. I felt like, I had this image of what a CEO should do, how they should spend their time and how they should behave and I tried to make myself fit that mold and it was a terrible mistake. I am not one to sit in quarterly review meetings and - or pipeline review meetings or to drill through the financials. I have a great appreciation for all those things, but at the end of the day, I love building products and I love - and I love recruiting amazing people to join me on the journey. And so this time around, I was very thoughtful about how I spent my time and how I define my role. And I was very, very proactive on recruiting incredibly senior capable people that could be CEOs of other companies to do the parts of my CEO job that I don't want to do. For example, I have a table in my office. It has six chairs around it. If there is a meeting that can't fit around that table, I don't go to it because I am not one to go to meetings. I'd rather be building software.

And - or I'd rather be making decisions and I found if I'm in a group meeting with 20 people, I am either - if I say anything, I'm going to overweight the meeting and if I don't participate then I have just got too short an attention span to actually stay engaged in the meeting. So I have really smart people that run the larger meetings. And - but do other parts of like leading the company that I am not passionate about, I'm not particularly good at.