Stanford eCorner

It's All About Simplicity

James Beshara, *Tilt*

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"It's all about simplicity," says Tilt Co-Founder and CEO James Beshara. "If you're going to build your own business, try to find simplifiers, not complicators." He describes how he learned this lesson through his first startup, dvelo.org, a site for crowdfunding loans and donations to aid organizations in developing countries.

Transcript

Complexity versus simplicity. You guys are probably much smarter than I. So this one probably doesn't need to be said. But when I was younger, when I'd first started listening to these podcasts five, six years ago, I thought in terms of complexity. The world was a complicated place. It was complex. I mean, you absorb any marketing message in the last few years of any great company, I mean, they are trying to confuse the hell out of you. The company known for simplicity, Apple, their marketing message was insanely great. Think about what that says to you when you're absorbing that message. It's like, it's so great there's no way I could ever, ever understand how great it is.

It's insane. It's literally insane how great this is. No, no, none of it was insane. It's actually pretty simple. Or you see on a brand new product patent pending. I mean, this is so complex, we have a patent for it. It's never been done before. And that's kind of the marketing language that I used to consume thinking that, OK, the first version of dvelo.org had way too many features. Luckily it had the future where you can invite family and friends. But it had way too many features.

And I spent 19 months building it before even telling anyone, before showing it to anyone. I showed it to maybe five people before we launched. I had a business plan. I showed that to everybody. But the actual software, showed to very, very few people. And I had it wrong. It is all about simplicity. Simplify, simplify, simplify. If you're going to build your own business, try to find simplifiers, not complicaters. A lot of people that subscribe-- even if you subscribe to simplicity-- if you bring on folks to your team that subscribe to complexity, that are complicaters rather than simplifiers, you are setting yourself up for a hard time.