



Stanford eCorner

The Business Case for Social Good

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/4062/The-Business-Case-for-Social-Good>

Shift Co-Founder and COO Minnie Ingersoll discusses how a public company can balance business concerns and ways to make a positive impact in society. She recalls being sent to Cairo at the start of the "Arab Spring" while she was at Google, which sought to increase access to information in the face of government restrictions by live streaming local news coverage on YouTube.



Transcript

So here, I was sent to-- this is Tahrir Square in Egypt right at the beginning of the Arab Spring. And the government of Egypt has just shut down cable TV. So they shut down Al Jazeera, which is actually where a lot of the Egyptians are getting their news. On my right-- if I've got this correctly, on my right is someone from the Egyptian military. On my left is someone from the police. The two factions weren't agreeing-- the military, the police-- and Google is trying to figure out, can we help in this situation? Is there something Google can do to help people get the access to the information? They just didn't know what was going on on the ground. No one did. And so one of the things we decided to do was, let's see if Google can start streaming Al Jazeera on YouTube. Let's try just streaming 24/7 live Al Jazeera. And so we came back to-- Patrick Pichette was our CFO at the time at Google-- and said, I don't really know that there's a business case here.

It's going to cost a lot of money. And do you think we could do it? And one of the things that he said that really stuck with me was he said, you know, I want you to think about Google as 1/2 public company and 1/2 movement, and we're here to do something good in the world, right? And it's not just about making money. And so we ended up streaming Al Jazeera on YouTube.