



Stanford eCorner

Shifting from Google to Used-Car Sales

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Shift's Minnie Ingersoll explains making the transition from being an employee within a big company to becoming an investor and entrepreneur. She recalls the generous benefits at Google, but also the limitations of working at such a large company. She contrasts that with the high level of energy and engagement at a startup, as well as the fast-paced environment and direct connection with customers.



Transcript

One of the things that also happens was then I decided, OK, let me really dig into the numbers here. Let me understand how big is this market. Talk me through what are sort of the unit economics that CarMax has. Is this something that makes sense as a business? And so first, actually, I invested in Shift. So as I said, I was friends with George, our CEO. And so I was an early angel investor in Shift, which made sense to me just as an investment. But I actually wasn't going to leave my job at Google. So Google was a really good place to work, as I said. And I was also-- I think I just had my first child. And so Google provides this amazing five month maternity package.

But it also kind of felt like, at Google, I was doing a lot of making decks to explain why we should do something that really made sense we should do. And then I had to make another deck to explain it to someone else. And I wasn't actually getting to do as much. I wasn't really launching stuff as much as I was really hoping. But it was nice. And someone summarized it really well for me, which is, they said, OK, at a big company, when someone joins the company and starts kind of doing your work, you're like, whoa, whoa, whoa, hey, hey, that's my work. Look, that's my vertical. I've got that vertical. And someone else says, you know what, that's my horizontal. I'm doing that.

Someone else says, look, I know I was assigned to that. And then at a small company, someone joins and starts doing your work, and you're like, oh my god, please start doing my work. Thank you so much. I've got way too much going on. And I think that that was a big difference for me coming from Google to Shift was it was just a different level of engagement and a different level of launching stuff. We're just able to do so much so much faster. So I started at Shift, actually, when I was on maternity leave. I just started helping out a little bit. And then I just got hooked. It was really exciting to be launching stuff.

And it was also just really amazing to have customers be so appreciative. So when I talk about Shift now, it's a small enough world that people tell me, look, I sold my car with Shift. And it was great. Thank you so much. And especially in the early days of Shift, I got to know a lot of our customers. They were just like, look, thank you for dealing with this. I've been meaning to deal with the car in my garage. I just didn't know what to do with it. So that was really exciting. And what I wrote here is a car company with Google DNA.

And well, Google, taught us a lot. Every day, Google, they say, what are you doing for the customer? How is this better for the customer? Are you providing better customer experience? And I don't think that the car dealerships of today tell their sales people every day when you think about this, think about is this the best experience for the person who walks in the door? Make sure that they walk away with a great experience. And I think that that's a really important thing. We talk a lot at Shift about every car you sell, would you sell this car to your younger sister? Make sure we're just treating people with that level of care.