



Stanford eCorner

Fostering Confidence and Cohesion

Derek Belch, STRIVR Labs

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STRIVR Labs CEO Derek Belch stresses the importance of paying attention to the little details that make all the difference to customers and a company's reputation. Belch, who co-founded the startup that uses virtual reality to train athletes, also discusses the challenges to collaborating and decision-making that come with having a dispersed workforce.



Transcript

- Operations are absolutely critical. Okay, I cannot emphasize this enough. When you guys go to business school, guys and girls some of you that may go to business school one day, and you fall asleep in an operations class 'cause you think it's boring, trust me you're doing yourself a disservice. And this doesn't necessarily mean factory line operations, right? Widgets, a fit in Toyota, Lean Six and efficiency and all that. That's not what I'm talking about, that's really, really high-level stuff. At my level, at Strivr's level it's ordering a computer, prepping it making sure it doesn't have malware on it when you send it out to the Dallas Cowboys, just little things that add up. It's making sure you send the remote and the remote part that are on this machine right now. 'Cause if you forget something, they are gonna call you and say, "What the heck's going on?" And they're gonna wonder why they're paying so much money for your service. So all of the little things with operations are absolutely critical. The other think I'll add to that is it really, really helps to have everybody in the same room at the same time.

It's very, very tempting in today's day and age to think, "Oh, I can do this remotely. We can have someone in New York, we can have someone in Wisconsin, we can have someone in San Diego. We can Skype, we put our VR headset on and talk to each other virtually." Trust me, decisions are best made and people are the most efficient when you are in the same room together. And one of the major issues that we're having right now, is we are 29 people and only 15 of them live in the Bay Area. And 14 of those, uh probably six of those 14 that don't live in the Bay Area, are some of our best people. People that I wish could be sitting next to me every day. Not 'cause I want to babysit anybody, because when we're in the same room and we talk out ideas, you know, you're missing someone on the phone, you're trying to play tag, guys and girls are traveling all the time; it's really, really tough. So to me, operations is not only figuring out how to efficiently operate your business, but also figuring out how to just efficiently make decisions. And part of that is being together in the same room. That's very, very important.