



Stanford eCorner

Insights of a Young CEO

Tracy Young, *PlanGrid*

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Tracy Young, co-founder of the company behind the construction-management app PlanGrid, reflects on how and why she decided to leap into entrepreneurship. While she assumed the role of CEO at an early age, Young says she surrounded herself with supportive co-founders. She also emphasizes that a chief executive must continually grow and learn in order to be an effective leader as a startup evolves and scales.



Transcript

there's just so many problems to solve. Actually, our skill sets translated nicely into being the founder of PlanGrid. Five co-founders were all engineers, two construction engineers and three software developers. And so we sort of look at problems and our challenges and we just slice them up into smaller things that we can tackle, and there's this funny side effect that happens if you have any success at all as a start up, especially as a first time CEO it's that I am constantly in the biggest job I've ever done before, and so surrounding myself with people who can shore up in every way I'm weak on was key to my ability to being able to do the job. Having four other co-founders to help take the load. Now we have, I mean, our executive team is quite awesome. I'd go to war with them any day, and in a lot of ways, running a company feels like we are going to war. And so, making sure I'm surrounding myself with people that I can learn from, people that can lead, and they are sort of my medium to lead the company through. - [Man] Yeah. - I think we are the average of everyone we surround ourselves with.

And then there's also this need to understand that if I don't grow, I won't be PlanGrid CEO a year from now, and so I have to believe in myself, and I have to make the effort however painful it is to grow as an executive, to grow as a CEO, to grow professionally, personally, to dive into areas that I don't understand at all and try to become an expert at it. And so there's this need for change and growth, and it starts with acknowledgement. I think I would have been an okay or decent CEO for six to eight months ago, and so just constantly working at that, and I think it's the will and whatever it is we're trying to grow on. It's like a muscle, I mean, it's like running. You run enough, you can run 10 miles. You do enough push-ups, and however shaky and painful it is, you're going to be able to do that 15 push ups. - [Man] Yeah. - In a few months from now. - Yeah.