



Stanford eCorner

A Shared Understanding of Mission

Kevin Weil, *Instagram*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/5279/A-Shared-Understanding-of-Mission>

Initially, startups are best led by a founder with a clear and specific vision, and a singular focus on achieving product-market fit, according to Kevin Weil, who worked at Twitter in its early days before joining Instagram. Once the business is established and grows, Weil says the mission should be shared knowledge so decision-making can be distributed and people can work toward a common goal.



Transcript

is very different then the way you organize and operate a 50 person is very different then the way we organize and operate Instagram today at 400 or 500. You know. It kind of, every time you double, things change and by the time you 10x things are definitely different. So I think it's natural when you're really small to be a lot more founder-led, where things do go through the founder. You don't have the band width if you're six people to have people running different experiments and other things. You wanna have a very very crystal clear goal. And operate entirely around that. Like trying to find product-market fit. I think it becomes different once you've found product-market fit and you're growing and trying to scale. It starts to become more and more important for the mission not to just be in the founder's head.

But for the mission to be something that everybody can repeat. For the most important, like you should be able to go around your company as it scales and ask anybody, what are the three most important things we're working on? And if people give different answers then you've got work to do. Everybody should be able to give the same answer. Everybody should be able to talk about the mission. And how those things that you're doing, the three most important things, relate back to the mission. And so the more you can get everybody focused on the same things and understanding the mission the more you can distribute decision making down into teams and hopefully move faster in parallel, with everyone going the same direction. Like you don't want to move faster with everyone going different directions at all times. You want to move faster with everyone going in parallel. That's what the mission is for.