



## Stanford eCorner

### Essential But Unsung Skills

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Entrepreneur and Emmy-winning journalist Carlos Watson talks about best practices he has observed in the startup world, noting that ventures that embrace proven processes over chaos tend to do better. He recalls the words of the late Silicon Valley leader Bill Campbell, who advised CEOs ranging from Steve Jobs to Amazon's Jeff Bezos, and described how today's visionaries are also masters at implementation.



#### Transcript

we talk about the creativity that's involved. We talk about the energy. Sometimes we talk about the all-nighters. We talk about the push. We talk about "Can you find terrific investors?" I would say that one of the skills that I think is absolutely critical and that at least I didn't hear anyone talking about was the importance of being incredibly organized. You know, it's funny. I think a lot of us about startup, and we think chaos. And I think the reality is, it's hard to get stuff done amidst chaos. And yet those places, I think, that are better organized, that actually follow through, that get things done, that, as simple as this sounds, have agendas and have follow-up items and actually tick those things off, I think often disproportionately those are the ones that end up winning. I remember years ago talking to a guy named Bill Campbell, And I don't know, did Bill ever come and speak here as well? Bill, who was advisor to a lot of terrific CEOs from Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Page to Jeff Bezos, used to say that the biggest transformation he had seen in the last 25 years of advising CEOs was the number of visionaries who had become superior operators.

That is, he said they came to realize that no matter how big and cool their idea was, if they couldn't actually implement it, if they weren't really organized and on top of it and the kind of person who could bring it to life, that it wouldn't come to life, that they couldn't simply hope that someone else was gonna do it. And so I would say that would have been the second thing that I would have emphasized. And it's not a skill that you hear talked about as much, but I would say that probably was a second surprise.