

URL: https://ecorner.stanford.edu/?post_type=snippet&p=57209

Joshua Hoffman, co-founder and CEO of industrial-chemicals maker Zymergen, underscores the value of teams over individuals, saying that no one person can hold the complexity of an entire business in their head. He also stresses the importance of cognitive diversity, adding that the tension caused by disagreements can be offset by unique strengths that others possess.



Transcript

- Value teams over individuals.. I'm a religious believer in the power of teams.. You know at Zymergen, we integrate machine learning, and lab scale automation, and biology, and complicated contract structures that look not unlike joint ventures.. And we take risk, we price risk as if we were an investment bank.. And there is just no way that anybody can hold the entire business in their head, much less be even half good at it.. Teams do magic, magic things.. Further, teams with real diversity.. And by this I mean diversity of thought.. Gender and race and sexuality are great proxies for diversity of thought, and they are worth looking for for those reasons.. But you wanna look for diversity of thought..

You wanna look for people who think differently than you do, in whatever way.. And those people will drive you up the wall.. Our CTO, he's an amazing, amazing guy.. He drives me up the wall sometimes.. He's a great guy, he's a really good friend of mine, he drives me up the wall.. He drives me up the wall because he has an ability to structure and plan, and he can put things into an architecture and a Gantt chart that I would never have imagined could be done..