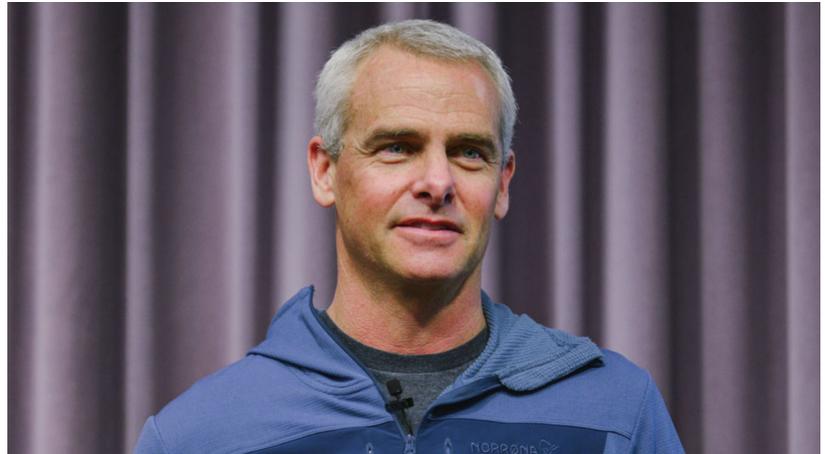


URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/the-art-of-leveraging-customer-feedback/>

The success of any product effort, observes Strava co-founder and executive chairman Mark Gainey, depends on listening to customer feedback without doing exactly what customers say they want. As an example, he explains how Strava put its own spin on a demand from cyclists for more for data about their hill climbs.



Transcript

- Yeah, it's a great question.. So the question is based on this sort of initial grass roots efforts and really having this deep conversation with these passionate cyclist how much was it the cyclist telling us what they wanted that we were building versus we were actually creating something that was new.. And my answer's probably not gonna be very satisfactory, but there's, this is the art and the magic of any kind of product effort and I think we got somewhat lucky at Strava.. Let me give credit where credit is due.. There's a gentleman named Davy Kitchel who's been with us from day one.. We call him the mad scientist.. And the art is our ability to listen, hear what their needs are, but not actually build exactly what they're asking, rather think of creative ways in which we can bring something that's special inside Strava.. So the perfect example, we were hearing people talk about climbs.. And what they were saying was that they wanted to understand how they could measure their performance on a climb when they were out there.. It would have been easy for us to just simply carve off that climb based on basically grade and distance and show them that data..

But when we took a look at it we thought, okay there's some more fun things we can do here.. For instance there's international standards around how you measure the difficulty of a climb.. So let's apply that international standard so that somebody know how hard that climb is.. And then when we got really excited was we quickly realized, hey I bet we can show how that person's doing against all their buddies on that same climb.. I mentioned the leaderboards a second ago.. That was something nobody was telling us about, but once we added that it was game over.. All of a sudden now we had all the cyclists trying to invite their friends on because they wanted to see how they compared.. So it was, it's that art of absolutely listening and seeing what was important to them and then what was the magic we can bring to that was something we hadn't necessarily heard.. Does that make sense?..