Here's how Snapchat has changed its company mission ahead of its IPO

Last summer, Evan Spiegel [sat in a dimly lit room](https://techcrunch.com/2015/06/16/snapchats-evan-spiegel-explains-snapchat-in-a-dimly-lit-room/) for four minutes, flipping through a notebook filled with drawings trying to explain what Snapchat is.

**"It's three screens: Snap, Chat, and Watch," he said about the app, four years after it launched. "And it's all about taking pictures and expressing yourself in the moment."**

For the people who never understood what Snapchat was in the first place, the video left people more confused than ever about what the company does. Internally, there were fears among some people that Snapchat wasn't doing a good job of explaining what it does or its future, sources say. Those fears only increased as Snapchat started prepping to go public.

One year later, the newly renamed Snap Inc. doesn't need to put out a four-minute video to explain its mission.

It's able to express it in six words: "Snap Inc. is a camera company."

On the road to IPO

Snap Inc., the camera company, is a long-way from its root as Picaboo, a "don't call it sexting" app that started in a Stanford dorm room. The idea — unique at the time — was that you'd be able to send pictures and have them disappear after the recipient viewed them.

Picaboo renamed to Snapchat and its first press materials [were images of girls in bikinis jumping around on the beach](https://techcrunch.com/2012/12/26/inside-snapchat-the-little-photo-sharing-app-that-launched-a-sexting-scare/). When Nick Bilton wrote about the app in 2012, one of its first major press articles, the New York Times zeroed in on the sexting angle with the headline "Disruptions: Indiscreet Photos, Glimpsed then Gone."

Today, articles [list](https://variety.com/2016/digital/opinion/snapchats-spectacles-a-vision-test-for-ceo-evan-spiegel-1201869896/) Evan Spiegel after Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg as tech visionaries. Going public, however, will test Spiegel's ability to communicate his vision for the company — and win over Wall Street with it.

Job listings shows Snap job listings Old job listings for the company used to describe Snapchat as a way to communicate with friends, watch stories, and explore news. "In short, we are a passionate team working hard to build the best platform in the world for telling great stories," old job descriptions said.

Yet, the newly renamed Snap Inc. has been working to shed its image of another social network, like Twitter, that could fail to evolve past its core use. Instead of being called a platform, it's a now a camera company.

**In September, that mission statement was swapped out for a new one, which appears in all new job listings: "We believe that reinventing the camera represents our greatest opportunity to improve the way people live and communicate."**

It's not totally a hardware company yet

While Snap might call itself a camera company, it isn't looking to take down Nikon, but to free its users from relying on their smartphone camera to communicate what they're doing in that moment.

"Our products empower people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together," continues the new boilerplate in job listings.

Its first foray into living in the moment is its [soon-to-be-released Spectacles](http://www.businessinsider.com/snapchat-glasses-2016-9), a pair of smart sunglasses that can record 10 seconds. While many people were [quick to compare it to Google Glass](http://www.businessinsider.com/snapchat-snap-spectacles-vs-google-glass-2016-9), one Snap employee told Business Insider that it's better to think of the glasses as a "GoPro for your face."

Snap wants to untether people from their phones, capture what's around them, and invent a way to share their world naturally. And this isn't a new part of the company's mission — it's just the first time Snap has started to clearly express it.

For as much criticism as Snapchat received for being a selfie app for narcissists, one of its core innovations was to open the app directly to the camera looking outward. It opens so you share your world, not just see what everyone else is doing.

Becoming a camera company just means its looking for different ways to capture it.