



Stanford eCorner

When and How are Patents Important?

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/412/When-and-How-are-Patents-Important>

Ringold talks about how patents are critical in different ways in different stages of a company. Patents in the early stage are very important to get a competitive edge. Ultimately, patents that are most valuable are those on composition and matter, he says.



Transcript

I've never been in a biotech company where we felt generally speaking that we had spent too much money on patents. Patents in the early stage are very important to allow you to have some advantage over the competition. Now obviously if it's in an industry where the lifecycle of products is very short, patents are less meaningful. And ultimately the patents that are most valuable are patents not on process or technology, but patents on composition of matter. So we try to patent a lot of the stuff that I showed you - the process used, the software. But people will ultimately come up with ways of doing it a slightly different way that will either get around your patent or whether it's too costly to worry about fighting one another and spending millions of dollars on that kind of a patent fight. But if we discovered that peak - 1,217 - in combination with another peak, those two things together are a definitive diagnostic for early stage MS. You absolutely want to patent that. That protects that as a diagnostic test that others can then not use without your blessing or permission. So patents are critical but they're critical in different ways of different stages of a company.