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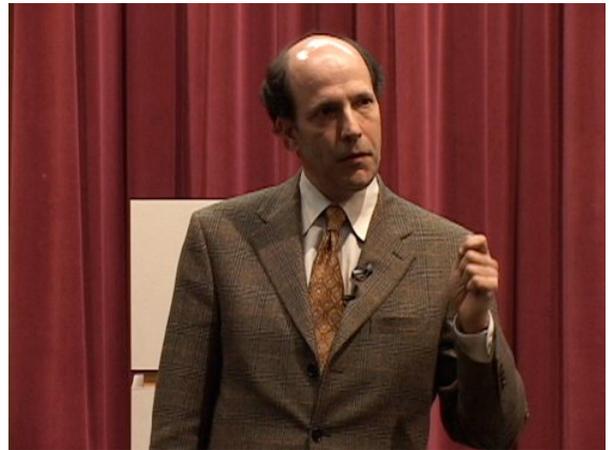
Career Advice: Five Takeaways

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1463/Career-Advice-Five-Takeaways>

Roos gives five takeaways in his talk: 1) Take risks; 2) Don't be afraid to take a step back in your career if it will help you move forward in the long run; 3) Surround yourself with good people and give them credit; 4) Little things really matter; and 5) Integrity matters more than anything else.



Transcript

Let me just quickly go through four, five things that are takeaways or advice I want to give you. Number one is, take risks. It's a given. You will never regret it, particularly while you're young. Don't think twice about it. Take the risk. That's what built these great companies. Number two, don't be afraid to take a step back in your career if you think it will help you move forward in the long run. And I use myself as an example of that. I was a litigator down in Los Angeles.

When I came up here, I came to Wilson. And Wilson wanted me to be a litigator, and they said, "If you do litigation, we'll make you a partner within one year," which was unheard of at the time. But if you decide to do corporate, which in all honesty we don't need corporate lawyers right now--and by the way, at the time we were 50; we're now 600--you're basically starting your career over because it's a new discipline. I made the decision to start my career over. And it is the smartest thing I've ever done. And whenever I had a chance to give anyone advice in any industry, I'd say, "Never hesitate to take a step back if ultimately it's what you want to do and you think it will propel you forward." Third, and this is from John Wooden's book--when I became the CEO of Wilson Sonsini I was given all these management books and everything. I actually read a lot of them. But what he said is, "It takes 10 hands to make a basket." And that's true. No matter what company you go to, there's the visionary, there's this, that and the other thing, there's always the star, but you surround yourself by good people, give credit to other people. It takes 10 hands to make a basket.

The next thing is--and this has been important; I've felt it in being the CEO of the firm and I see the best CEOs in the Valley--let everyone reach for the stars. We have an unbelievably incredible talent pool right here in the Silicon Valley. The best CEOs, the best entrepreneurs are the ones that give everyone the opportunity to reach for the stars. Because as I said, merit rules out, and sometimes you will be surprised at who in the end actually reaches the star. So give everyone the opportunity to do so. Two more things. Little things really matter. They build into big things. And that's execution. You can have the greatest management team in the world, the greatest idea in the world, the greatest Three Circles on the napkin, or whatever your strategy is, and if you don't execute the little things, it doesn't make a bit of difference.

Your company will fail. And finally, and probably the most important, is integrity. Integrity matters more than anything you will do in your career. Because it is a small ecosystem, because you develop networks all over the world, if you maintain your integrity and maintain your values, and they will always be put to the test, but if you do, you will never look back.