



Stanford eCorner

The Ups and Downs of Being a CEO

Scott Kriens, *Juniper Networks*

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A Silicon Valley veteran shares his wisdom and describes the ups and downs of his career. He stresses the importance of not getting caught up in the media, and instead staying focused on the task at hand.



Transcript

In the course of the time that I've been at the company as a CEO which has been most of the ten, the company's about 10-12 years old, so been there other than first or four or five months when Pradeep was getting started. I've been there. Well, on Day 1, I was nobody. Year 3, the company went public and market capital went to \$70 billion, I was a rock star. Limos, room full of people, hanging on every word. Then the company went from \$250 a share to \$4 and I personally lost almost \$4 billion and so I became an idiot, because only an idiot will let that happen. And then in the last year, or six months or so, hopefully you guys haven't wasted your time following this, but there's been whole investigation of lots of companies around something called "stock-option backdating". So today, I'm a criminal. So, I've gone from nobody to rock star to idiot to criminal, in the same job doing basically the same thing. And that will pass and I will not end up being a criminal, and I'm sure I will never again be thought I was a rock star.

Point is this, don't get too caught up in anything either the praise or the criticism but being really focused on what you're about and why you're doing it in the first place is a really valuable thing to remember.