



Stanford eCorner

Value of Innovation

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1637/Value-of-Innovation>

Scott suggests that basic questions such as why and for which market are asked before significant engineering resources can be allocated to any project. While Juniper's culture promotes innovation, it doesn't appreciate an innovation that is never used.



Transcript

One of the things we've tried to do is to push on "Why are you doing it that way?" and "What's different?" and "What's better?" We try to spend a lot of time asking, "Why is it better?" "What's different?" "Who cares?" And let that be a question that we only invest in after we're convinced in the answer. That's a question everyone wants to answer and wants to be satisfied with. Because one of the things that defines, maybe this is an engineering comment, but certainly one of the things that defines really good engineers, in our experience, is successes for them are not defined by the brilliance of the innovation. It's defined by how successful it is in the marketplace. If lots of people use it, then that feels good and that's important. And it might be the most incredible thing ever invented, but if nobody uses it, in our company culture, that's not considered good. It may not be quite as "innovative" as a research experiment, but if gets used by lots of people, then that's a definition of innovation that we hold in high regard. So we try and drive a lot of our questions and a lot of our process around, "Why is anybody going to care about this?" and "How are they going to use it?" And make sure that we are comfortable in the answer to those questions. And it motivates people to think about those questions in the design and in the contemplation of things. It's a very important thing to do, and in getting to a bigger company, to answer one of the earlier questions, we're working very hard to hang on to that so that it doesn't get lost in the challenges ahead.