



Stanford eCorner

Compete Through Product Iteration

Aaron Levie, *Box.net*

January 20, 2011

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2615/Compete-Through-Product-Iteration>

According to Aaron Levie, CEO and co-founder of Box.net, successful startups need to be agile when testing ideas in the market and quick to shut down ideas that don't work. Beyond the power of learning to "fail fast," Levie advises close examination of who you are actually competing with to discover ways to innovate that competitors may not be built to do.



Transcript

But there is this philosophy of fail fast, right? You want to test things on the market and you want to turn them off if they're not working. And your ability to succeed as a startup goes up with your ability to do that because you're constantly reiterating, you're constantly trying new versions, new ways and new experiences of doing things. So, you have to be able to turn things off. I think there is one part, science for some of the stuff, like literally. If there is no uptake, maybe you're too early in the market, you haven't marketed it the right way. Make sure to revisit what you're doing or what that looks like. As it relates to competitive threats, it's important to really think about how people are going to be competing with you, what are the factors that they're going to compete with you on and how essentially you can compete with them in ways that it's not possible for them, right? So, for a solution like Microsoft or EMC or some of these larger enterprise companies, we're able to do something that would require them to essentially cannibalize some major revenue streams. So, we can actually compete with them on a dimension and a scale that we don't think they're very good at. And we think that's going to create a pretty big advantage for us.