

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/original-mistakes/>

Robinhood co-founder and CEO Vlad Tenev explores his response to the company's GameStop crisis and recalls an encouraging message from an investor: "When a crisis is successfully navigated by a company, it unlocks the next level of value creation." Tenev urges founders to embrace the occasional "original mistake," leveraging each one to strengthen the company going forward.



Transcript

- What's been really special for me is that, you know, 00:00:06,420 when we were in the thick of it like, you know, Thursday, the 28th, Friday, the 29th, I got so many messages from former investors, mentors, people that are close and friendly.. And the one that stuck out to me was, yeah, one of our early investors said, you know, Vlad, when a crisis is successfully navigated by a company, it unlocks the next level of value creation, right.. And so obviously you don't want a crisis to kill you because then you're dead.. But if you successfully navigate it, I think it's a huge accelerant to the company and to the mission.. So we're still writing history, but we're doing everything in our power to make it a boon for Robinhood.. And we shall see how the future holds.. But whatever's in our grasp, whatever we can do, we'll try to move in a positive direction.. And I know, you know, we disappointed some customers who wanted to trade those stocks on Thursday, but I look back at some of our other controversies, right.. Like shortly after my last Stanford event, you know, March 3rd of 2020, a day which lives in infamy in Robinhood lore, we had some system issues, customers weren't able to trade, to buy and sell for pretty much an entire market day.. And you know, we spent a lot of time and effort just sort of like rebuilding certain systems at Robinhood to make sure we can scale with the growth, and with the exceptional growth that we've seen in the past couple of weeks, knock on wood, and I'm knocking on wood here, the systems have been reliable and operational..

And so I'm a big fan of making a series of original mistakes.. So we don't wanna make no mistakes 'cause then you're not doing anything.. But if you make a series of original mistakes as we put it, then you definitely don't wanna make the same mistake twice.. And that's our philosophy...