ArsDigita

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ArsDigita adında bir VC firmasının kabalıklarıyla ilgili

You can't base a business on "we'll be better programmers than the folks at Microsoft and Oracle"; each company has enough computer science PhDs and expert software engineers to bury 100 competitors. You can, however, base a business on "we'll attack this problem a few years before Microsoft and Oracle notice it and recognize it as a problem."

We were still small, though, and we avoided direct confrontations with heavily financed competitors. They were closed-source; we were open source. We'd undermine them by creating a world-wide open-source standard rather than try to outshout them with full-page ads in Business 2.0.
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In parallel to all of this VC stuff we'd been trying to recruit an "outside CEO". Based on my conversations with successful business people around the world, I now believe this is a fundamentally bad idea. Even the most able person will need a few years to learn about a company's market, challenge, mission, culture, and people.
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For roughly one year Peter Bloom (General Atlantic), Chip Hazard (Greylock), and Allen Shaheen (CEO) exercised absolute power over ArsDigita Corporation. During this year they
spent $20 million to get back to the same revenue that I had when I was CEO
declined Microsoft's offer (summer 2000) to be the first enterprise software company with a .NET product (a Microsoft employee came back from a follow-up meeting with Allen and said "He reminds me of a lot of CEOs of companies that we've worked with... that have gone bankrupt.")
deprecated the old feature-complete product (ACS 3.4) before finishing the new product (ACS 4.x); note that this is a well-known way to kill a company among people with software products experience; Informix self-destructed because people couldn't figure out whether to run the old proven version 7 or the new fancy version 9 so they converted to Oracle instead)
...
How could these three guys have achieved such dreadful results? For that it is worth looking at what kind of leadership is required for a software products company. First, you probably want someone who has previously founded and run a company or been CEO at a company founded by others (i.e., not someone who has been an employee his or her whole life). Second, you probably want someone who has previous experience as an executive in the software products business. Third, you probably want someone with domain knowledge. Fourth, you probably want someone with technical knowledge.
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When I explained the problems with the product and the financials, Kaiser said "Isn't it possible that this is just your opinion, that Allen and Chip would see it differently?"
Relativism. It was impressive in a way to see Protagoras's sophism alive and well after 2500 years. But the "all points of view are equally valid and supported only by someone's opinion" ignores the fact that it is easy to measure the correctness of business beliefs: some people are losing money and some are making money; some companies are gaining market share while others are losing market share...
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