The Failure Fest: Learning from Our Greatest Mistakes

Monday,
February 25, 2008
4:15pm

What is Failure?

"Failure is the path of least resistance."

– Anonymous

What is Failure?

"Failure is easy- just don't try."

- Anonymous

Is Failure Predictable?

Is Failure Important?

The Butterfly

“Our task is not to fix the blame for the past, but to fix the course for the future.” – John F. Kennedy

Each challenge has hidden in it an opportunity so powerful that it literally dwarfs the problem. The greatest success stories were created by people who recognized a problem and turned it into an opportunity.

-Joseph Sugarman

Mistakes are good!

Repeating mistakes are bad!

Great Failures of Recent Times

“This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.”

- Western Union internal memo, 1876

"Stocks have reached what looks like a, permanently, high plateau." -- Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929

"I think there is a world market for, maybe, five computers." --
Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943.

“We don’t like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.”

- Decca Recording Co., Rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." --
Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977.

"The concept is interesting and well-formed. But, in order to earn better than a 'C,' the idea must be feasible." -- A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. (Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.)

"So we went to Atari and said, 'Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us?' Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we'll come to work for you.' And they said, 'No.' So then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't got through college yet."

- Apple Computer, Inc. Founder Steve Jobs on attempt to get Atari and HP interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

"64K ought to be enough memory for anybody." -- Bill Gates, 1981

Types of Mistakes

- Typos
- Simple Errors
- Miscalculations
- The Unpredictable X-factor
- Failure to Listen
- Failure to Predict

A bend in the road is not the end of the road…
unless you fail to turn.

Now… Let's Hear Your Mistakes!
Feel good knowing you'll help others!