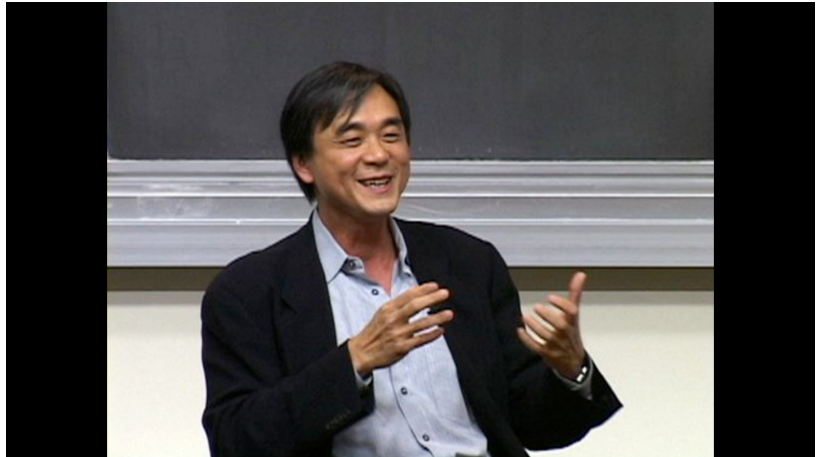


URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/seeking-advice-and-guidance-as-a-ceo>

Dominic Orr, CEO of Aruba Networks, reflects on sources of advice and guidance in his role as CEO. Orr highlights the importance of a rigorous board and advisors to challenge his thinking. However, Orr also speaks about his use of psychological counselors to help his executive team work together as effectively as possible. He suggests that this effort is vital because although there are many talented individuals in Silicon Valley, helping these individuals work together as a team is the most important element required for success.



Transcript

You are the CEO.. Who do you turn to for advice and guidance when you end up with a really challenging situation? Do I need to worry about my install base? Well, first of all, I have a very strong board of directors.. And I actually pick, within the board of directors, two gentlemen who have been my boss before.. And people said I was crazy, but I said, "I don't know.. I liked them." I like to walk into the boardroom to feel I'm being challenged, and challenged critically, and with very wise people.. So I use my board a lot.. I also use management -- I won't say management consultant.. I actually use more psychological consultants, psychologists quite a bit in the last ten years of my management practice, because ultimately, when you're talking about running a company, it all boils down to people, and it all boils down to your executive team working as a team.. There is no lack of talent in the Silicon Valley.. But the fundamental issue is when you put all A+ players in the same room, do they operate as a single team? And that is where you really get into a lot of counseling and looking at each person's psychological profile and strength and deficiency, and kind of convince them to take the counsel and work as a team..

So all this counseling and advice is really, be around creating a very powerful, effective team, because the leader of a company like Aruba Networks fundamentally is there to solve crises and take advantage of opportunities.. Which means there's no fixed formula.. There's nothing written down in a book.. Everyday, you go to work, you listen to the radio, and you listen, you check on the web and see whether there's a new thing that happened that might look innocent, but might hurt you 90 days down the road, or even in a year.. Or something that you quickly react to take advantage of.. Because being a CEO, if you are a really really enlightened one, you would not want to dig into the day to day operations of your staff, because that's what you have your staff for, right? So I think I work with firm advisers, consultants and so on indefinitely...