

From Professor to Inventor to Entrepreneur: The Excitement of High Tech Innovation



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In this talk I will discuss the formation, growth, and eventual selling of a high-tech company. Both the fun parts and the not so fun parts will be discussed. The biggest surprises experienced and what I think are the most important factors in growing a successful high-tech company will be described.



12:00 noon, Tuesday
April 28, 2009
Sloan Auditorium, Goergen Building
Lunch served

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Abstract

The WYKO Corporation was a high-tech company founded to design, manufacture, sell, and service metrology instruments for many applications, with the largest market being in the magnetic data storage industry. WYKO grew out of the research my students and I did at the Optical Sciences Center at the University of Arizona, but its origins actually started earlier at the Itek Corporation where I went to work after getting my PhD in optics at the University of Rochester. In this talk I will discuss the formation, growth, and eventual selling of a high-tech company. Both the fun parts and the not so fun parts will be discussed. The biggest surprises experienced and what I think are the most important factors in growing a successful high-tech company will be described.

Biography

James C. Wyant received a B.S. in physics in 1965 from Case Western Reserve University and M.S. and Ph.D. in optics from the University of Rochester in 1967 and 1968. He was an optical engineer with the Itek Corporation from 1968 to 1974, when he joined the faculty of the Optical Sciences Center at the University of Arizona where he was an assistant professor 1974 – 1976, Associate Professor 1976 – 1979, and Professor 1979 – date. In 1999 he became the Director of the Optical Sciences Center and in 2005 he became the first Dean of the College of Optical Sciences. He was a co-founder of three high-tech companies; the WYKO Corporation, 4D Technology, and DMetrix.

Wyant is a member of the National Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the Optical Society of America (OSA), the International Optical Engineering Society (SPIE), and the Optical Society of India. Wyant was the 1986 president of SPIE and he is currently president-elect of OSA. Wyant has received several awards including the SPIE Gold Medal, the SPIE Technology Achievement Award, and the OSA Joseph Fraunhofer Award.