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Bonanos, Christopher. Instant: the story of Polaroid

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Bonanos, Christopher. Instant: the story of Polaroid

Before there were Steve Jobs and Apple, there were Edwin Land and Polaroid. Land was a charismatic, inventive leader, holding over 500 patents. Land didn't set out to reinvent photography; his first project was perfecting a synthetic polarizer. Land eventually succeeded; polarized sunglasses as we know them might not exist today without his efforts. From this humble beginning, manufacturing polarizing film for car headlights and sunglasses, Land managed to build his company into the hugely influential multi-national it became. He did this in much the same way Jobs did many years later; that is, by hiring the best minds available to him in any and all specialities, and then turning them loose in well-stocked labs to see what they could come up with. This approach worked well for a long time, but the end was inevitable. Several bad decisions and some bad blood led to Land stepping away from the company he'd built. That was the beginning of the end; Land's sucessors did not have the same passion and ingenuity and the company changed hands several times before declaring bankruptcy twice, the second time in 2009.

While the behind-the-scenes details of Polaroid's rise to the top and rapid fall are fascinating, this is truly Land's story. Very few people today are aware of his contributions to technology and to business. A worthwhile read.

bonanos and instant polaroid
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