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Bridging the Divide- Adventures of an academic entrepreneur

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Academic research and entrepreneurship are simultaneously synergistic and conflicting as careers and my talk is about the challenges of bridging these careers. After a research career at Bell Labs and Bellcore which led to the invention of the Pulsed Laser Deposition Process I started Neocera as a company to translate products arising from academic research. Leaving Bell and building the company in Maryland as a Professor at UMD was a great learning experience. Managing creative people to productize, focusing on marketing/sales and managing cash flows constituted a world significantly different from what one encounters in the academia. Survival is key and a hasty decision can be the difference between success and bankruptcy. In my talk I will discuss the various lessons I learnt from the process and how one handles the challenges to eventually make an economic and societal impact.