

Red Hat CEO Talks Turkey With The Motley Fool

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If you bought Red Hat when I told you to act on a temporary dip six months ago, you're sitting on a 40% gain today. Over the same time period, that beats even fellow high-tech highfliers like Informatica (Nasdaq: INFA), Apple (Nasdaq: AAPL), or nearly any other market darling. Not bad for a company that makes a living selling software you can get for free.

But wait -- there's more!

That's the tale of the tape, but the real story is that Mr. Market is starting to take notice of Red Hat's unique business model. I'd love to say that investors and analysts understand it, but that watershed moment still seems to elude most of them.

In an exclusive interview after the traditional earning call, CEO Jim Whitehurst took the time to talk with me about what makes Red Hat a success in open-source software sales, where everybody from Novell (Nasdaq: NOVL) to Oracle (Nasdaq: ORCL) has largely failed.

"We're not selling software, right? The software is free," Whitehurst said. "We have to add value around the software, beyond the software.

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