

Book Review

Think Simple: How Smart Leaders Defeat Complexity

Book: Think Simple

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“Making everything as simple as possible but no simpler”. —Albert Einstein

Simplicity is one of the most deceptive concept —Ken Segall

This is the second book by Ken Segall on the importance of simplicity in business. His first book “Insanely Simple” talk about the journey of Apple with simplicity. It talk about how Apple replaces big-business complexity with simplicity. Inspired by the Apple story, Ken took the concept further and explored simplicity in other businesses. In the Journey spread over almost two years, he met more than 40 people from different companies. This book is based on the experience of those people who defeated complexity and bought simplicity into their business. Each of these leaders have examples of how simplicity helps the company in improving its performance and set it apart from the competitors. All these views are unique and different in themselves but there is one similarity i.e. each of them favour simplicity.

The book contain the stories from diverse business like banking, automobile, fashion, entertainment, technology and many more who followed business strategy to be simple in values and de-root the complexity before it could takeoff. For example, Jerry Greenfield of “Ben and Jerry’s” spoke about how simplicity helped them turn global from local without losing their focus on simple values. There is an interview of the CEO of Westpac Bank, one of Australia’s largest banks where it is discussed how simplicity helped them in inviting new customers. Ron Johnson is another person who had been interviewed meticulously on his experience with Apple and post Apple. There are interviews from people associated with Hundai, Microsoft, Dell and many more.

There are ten chapters in the book including the introduction. The book starts with Simplicity Isn’t Simple, followed by

chapters on Simplicity Is on a Mission, Simplicity Is in the Air, Simplicity Loves a Leader, Simplicity Is a Team Sport, Simplicity is True to the Brand, Simplicity Fits all Sizes, Simplicity Is Sleeker, Simplicity Creates Love, Simplicity Is Instinctive and Finding Your Road to Simplicity. Each of these chapters is devoted to business themes like leadership, mission, brand etc. and talk about how to use simplicity as a business tool. In these chapters, the author writes on areas like the science of simplicity, the transformational power of mission, finding a mission that scales, the beginning of simplicity, how strong values inspire bold decisions, a culture of commitment, how to maintain the startup as it grows, when leading for simplicity failed, and simplicity as a group effort. Over all these chapters, Segall’s point is that being complicated is easy and making things simpler is the challenge. He further states that complexity is the side effect of civilization, “The more we discover, the more we invent, the more we advance, the more complicated life becomes. In the book, he offers fifteen specific recommendations that will helps the readers formulate a “roadmap to develop strategies to consider and actions you might take as you set out to leverage the power of simplicity.”

While the message in the book seems to be simple, getting things done is difficult. The philosophy that the author embraced in the book can be followed by anybody, in any kind of company in any sector and in any part of the world; the only challenge is to start. This book is a guide for all types of companies to crush their complexity and focus on what matters most to them, how to improve performance and be faster and better.

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