



Companies on a Mission

L. Hunter Lovins, Michael V. Russo

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"Let your social and environmental conscience be your guide" can be a successful and durable strategy for a firm. This is the first book to explain how following a vision for the earth and for society can be a powerful route to profits for small and medium sized companies.

Companies on a Mission explains that mission-driven companies appreciate and leverage traditional strategic principles—with a twist—to win in the marketplace. By clearly and pragmatically laying out this argument, author Michael V. Russo crystallizes for enlightened businesses what Michael Porter made clear for mainstream firms years ago. The book shows that a mission-driven approach creates significant barriers to imitation by larger, established rivals. Mission-driven firms build their brands on authenticity. Only you are you. And, authenticity builds customer loyalty. Later in the book, Russo moves beyond the firm level to look at these companies in context. He finds, for instance, that just as specific industries often develop in geographic clusters, mission-driven companies also aggregate. But, they put down roots where other businesses are pursuing complementary goals. Portland and the Bay Area are two such hotbeds. This allows for cooperation, as opposed to breeding stiff competition.

The rise to prominence of mission-driven companies like Patagonia, Seventh Generation, Kettle Foods, and Calvert Group is undoubtedly the result of powerful trends in consumer markets, including the rise of conscious consumerism, the transparency movement, and fallout from global competition. Most books that address social and environmental issues are focused on large corporations, crafted as autobiographies by CEOs, or written as moral calls to action without regard for the bottom line. *Companies on a Mission* both chronicles a movement and provides grounded guidance to entrepreneurs and managers who wish to join the wave. For these readers, this book is a one-of-a-kind bible.

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