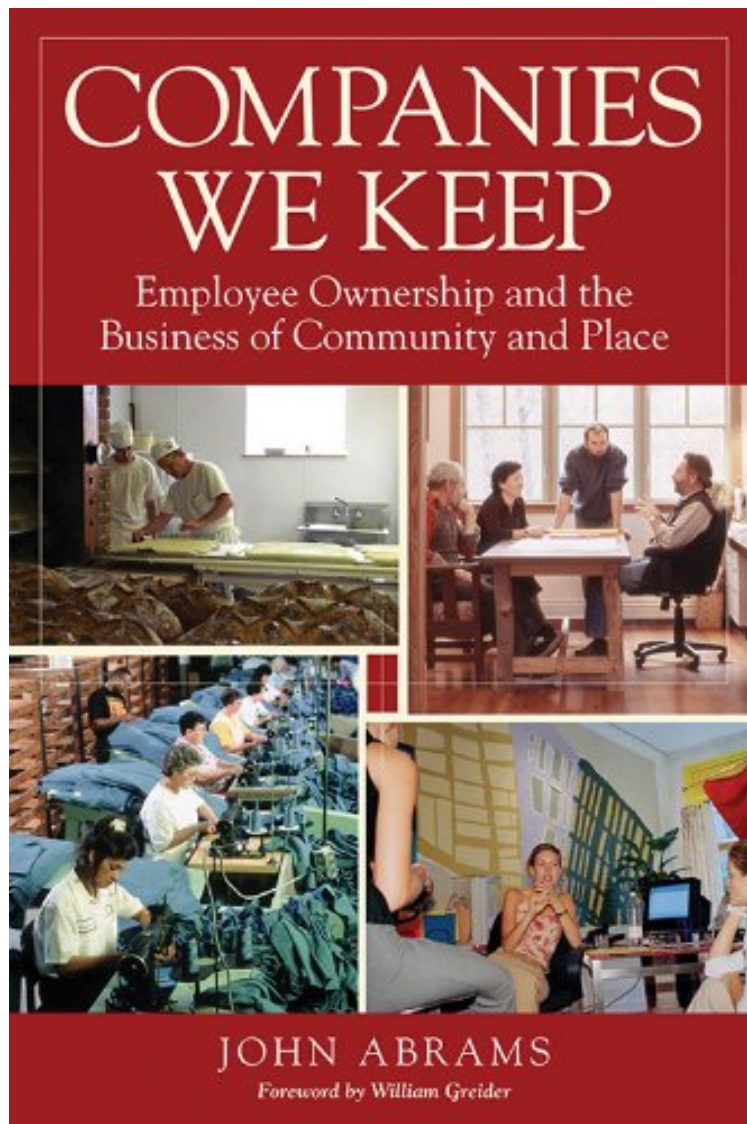


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# Companies We Keep: Employee Ownership and the Business of Community and Place, 2nd Edition

John Abrams

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**John Abrams : Companies We Keep: Employee Ownership and the Business of Community and Place, 2nd Edition** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Companies We Keep: Employee Ownership and the Business of Community and Place, 2nd Edition:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Startup Required ReadingBy ABuckellf only this were required reading for every Silicon Valley wannabe out there! Abrams speaks not of exits, but of optimized existence--building

persistence and community into your business, and building it for the long term. Today's business media and venture capitalists admires the fast-growing unicorn monoliths admonishes the crash and burns without questioning the validity of that whole narrative. Abrams' book proves that there is a blueprint for entrepreneurs seeking to build a legacy instead of a get rich quick scheme with their business, and I fully recommend it for any business owner, entrepreneur, or reader seeking to start up their own venture. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Change the world : begin at the workplace !By Guy DenutteWhen we are aware of all the mess we are in, it is important to be able to see some light shining at the end of the tunnel. This book shows a path, told in a passionate way by the author, in which a company has gradually been transformed into an employee-owned company, with a revolutionary new Mission : "To enrich our community through our work" ! The good news is that this experience can easily be reproduced in nearly every company in the world.South Mountain was founded by John Abrams in 1975. As years went by, the founder thought about the fate of his company in the long run. A phenomenon that we see over and over again with small and medium sized companies is that after one or maybe two generations, those companies fail and disappear. To enable his company to sustain itself beyond his tenure, Abrams thought of selling his company to his own employees. Giving responsibility to his own workforce, the company became "as much a community as a company", in his words. "We build not only houses, but also connections and bonds between people, between people and land, and between commerce and place. We are organized around the idea of maintaining and perpetuating an ongoing business community, and sharing ownership democratically with the people we work with. We think we are crafting a company to keep."Democratizing a company enables work to become "an expression of who we are and one of our most important anchors of meaning".Social responsibility and ecological sustainability go hand in hand. This led in the last years to the implementation of renewable energy, and the objective is to become a carbon-neutral company in a few years time.South Mountain is an example of how our current economy of employees can be transformed into an economy of owners. The best news is that this transformation can quite easily be achieved. John Abrams thinks the following : "My fellow baby boomers own several million businesses, and during the next two decades most of these founders will exit. The businesses will either shut down or be passed on. Selling to employees is an option that deserves to be more widely understood, for it offers powerful benefits to all parties." On top of that, it would be beneficial to democracy at large and improve the sustainability of our world.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An inspiring and practical guide for all progressive minded business peopleBy A. AlexanderI highly recommend this book. It is a revision of Abrams' 2005 book, *The Company We Keep: Reinventing Small Business for People, Community and Place*, which I read when it came out. He takes you through the history of South Mountain, a 32 year old design/build company he founded and examines the eight cornerstone philosophies and practices that underpin South Mountain and any green business that wants to harness the power of employee ownership, workplace democracy and community commitment. I met Abrams at the Green Business Conference in San Francisco in 2005. He is a wonderful, warm, down to earth human being and highly experienced business person. I love small business and how it can positively impact individuals and communities, and I could not book his book down.

Part memoir and part examination of a new business model, the 2005 release of *The Company We Keep* marked the debut of an important new voice in the literature of American business. Now, in *Companies We Keep*, the revised and expanded edition of his 2005 work, John Abrams further develops his idea that companies flourish when they become centers of interdependence, or "communities of enterprise."Thoroughly revised with an expanded focus on employee ownership and workplace democracy, *Companies We Keep* celebrates the idea that when employees share in the rewards as well as the responsibility for the decisions they make, better decisions result. This is an especially timely topic. Most of the baby boomer generation—the owners of millions of American businesses—will retire within the next two decades. In 2001, 50,000 businesses changed hands. In 2005, that number rose to 350,000. Projections call for 750,000 ownership transitions in 2009. Employee ownership—in both the philosophical and the practical sense—is gathering steam as businesses change hands, and Abrams examines some of the many ways this is done.*Companies We Keep* is structured around eight principles—from "Sharing Ownership" and "Cultivating Workplace Democracy" to "Thinking Like Cathedral Builders" and "Committing to the Business of Place"—that Abrams has discovered in the 32 years since he cofounded South Mountain Company on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Together, these principles reveal communities of enterprise as a potent force of change that can—and will—improve the way Americans do business.