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Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul

Howard Schultz, Joanne Gordon
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Howard Schultz, Joanne Gordon : Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Starting a business is tough, but keeping it going is even tougherBy Tom SalesI read this book specifically to better understand a CEO's perspective in starting a company and then coming back to save it. Howard Schultz's very personalized account demonstrates the commitment needed to keep a vision and mission statement going as later leaders start to vary from the initial vision and as the economy inevitably affects the

business. Schultz casts some blame on leaders who succeeded him, but most of Starbucks' issues seemed to be caused by the recession more so than internal decisions. If one recalls how many personal finance experts were recommending to skip the \$4 latte as a way of saving money, this loss of business they suffered through 2008-9 shouldn't have been too much of a surprise. With that said, the book was still interesting in seeing the difficulty of micro-focusing on each individual customer experience while simultaneously macro-focusing on growth. There are definitely advantages to being on every street corner, but the more spread out the company becomes the harder it is to make that experience unique but consistent for those who want the same product and experience in any location, fast but leisurely for those who aren't in a hurry, and successful for the company that can't help but focus on growth when opening multiple stores every day. Schultz effectively describes all the variables he considered through this time period to "thread the needle" to get the best of this small and big focus. While it's hard to recognize that the successful companies we depend upon are typically short-lived, this book does a good job of showing why. A founder's focus and commitment to the original vision for a company is difficult to pass on to successors who have to be equally if not more committed to pushing it forward and adapting to changing customer tastes and competitive threats. As Schultz points out here, his successors couldn't accomplish that even though they were good people. Like Michael Dell of Dell Computer, Schultz cared and resolved to come back and make the necessary adjustments to carry Starbucks through. The average CEO probably wouldn't do that. And--as other reviewers have observed--what will happen the next time Schultz retires. It's why so many businesses don't last over extended periods and inevitably submit to competitors who come up with better ideas. Even several years after it was published, this book is a good read to understand these long-term challenges that all businesses face. Today--as Sears, J.C. Penney and (gasp) even Walmart--seem destined to fail, "Onward" helps to explain why killer business models must be constantly tweaked or else they will eventually stagger and then fail.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Good Book
By Brooklyn Joe
After reading Howard Schultz' first book "Pour Your Heart Into It" I must admit that I was highly excited to read is "sequel". However, I must admit that I was a bit disappointed. Not to say that this book was not a good book, because it actually was. Nevertheless, I feel that I expected more from this one. Many of the chapters dragged on and I found a lot of the stories and lessons very repetitive. However, I will add that I still admire Howard Schultz and everything that he has brought to the world in the Starbucks company. I also respect his business values and work ethics and feel that he is one to learn from and emulate. He fought the recession head on and was able to bring Starbucks back to its glory. My first suggestion to readers would be to read the first book mentioned above. Then you can read this book as sort of a suffix or even a quick read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A love letter to his company
By Kindle Customer
It's a book that discusses the re-energizing of a aging brand and a study of how to focus and lead in times of difficulty for a company. It also is a vehicle for the founder to express his passion for the firm he created, and how that drove the decisions and growth of the company. It also seems to be a platform to discuss his regrets for some difficult decisions along the way which I wish he would have gone through in some more detail. However, a great read for someone trying to understand what makes a company beyond the numbers.

In this #1 New York Times bestseller, the CEO of Starbucks recounts the story and leadership lessons behind the global coffee company's comeback and continued success. In 2008, Howard Schultz decided to return as the CEO of Starbucks to help restore its financial health and bring the company back to its core values. In *Onward*, he shares this remarkable story, revealing how, during one of the most tumultuous economic periods in American history, Starbucks again achieved profitability and sustainability without sacrificing humanity. Offering you a snapshot of the recession that left no company unscathed, the book shows in riveting detail how one company struggled and recreated itself in the midst of it all. In addition, you'll get an inside look into Schultz's central leadership philosophy: It's not about winning, it's about the right way to win. *Onward* is a compelling, candid narrative documenting the maturing of a brand as well as a businessman. Ultimately, Schultz gives you a sense of hope that, no matter how tough times get, the future can be more successful than the past.

.com Best Books of the Month, April 2011: *Onward* is not a puff piece. In just under 400 brisk pages, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz details the multitude of factors--the recession, new consumer behavior, overexpansion--that led to the company's downturn during 2007-2008. Obviously, Schultz was successful, and his book has plenty of valuable lessons about management and leadership--standard features for most business books. But the most interesting thing about *Onward* is Schultz's honesty about the whole process, from his determination to make difficult personnel changes to his admission that he considers it a personal failure when he sees someone with a competitor's cup of coffee. Schultz even makes the chapters about his agonies over the company's breakfast sandwiches a fascinating study in the minute decisions that go into running a multibillion-dollar company. Conflicts, raw emotions, high stakes: *Onward* is a business book that goes beyond feel-good maxims and actually has a story to tell. --Darryl Campbell
From Publishers Weekly
Starred . In 2000, Starbucks' founder and CEO Schultz (*Pour Your Heart into It*) stepped down from daily oversight of the company and assumed the role of chairman. Eight years later, in the midst of the recession and a period of decline unprecedented in the company's recent history, Schultz--feeling that the soul of his brand was at risk--

returned to the CEO post. In this personal, suspenseful, and surprisingly open account, Schultz traces his own journey to help Starbucks reclaim its original customer-centric values and mission while aggressively innovating and embracing the changing landscape of technology. From the famous leaked memo that exposed his criticisms of Starbucks to new product strategies and rollouts, Schultz bares all about the painful yet often exhilarating steps he had to take to turn the company around. Peppared with stories from his childhood in tough Canarsie, N.Y., neighborhoods, his sequel to the founding of Starbucks is grittier, more gripping, and dramatic, and his voice is winning and authentic. This is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, management, or the quest to connect a brand with the consumer. (Mar.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

From Booklist Schultz is the founder and CEO of Starbucks, a company that began as a small Seattle distributor of coffee beans and ground coffee that he transformed into what it is today, inspired by the espresso shops he visited in Italy. Schultz described the founding of Starbucks in his first book, *Pour Your Heart into It* (1997). Written with Joanne Gordon, a former *Forbes* writer and contributing editor, this account is a spotlight on the period of 2007-08, when the company lost some of its vision due to overexpansion and the pressure to maintain unabated growth. Seeing that Starbucks was becoming a victim of its own success, Schultz returned to the CEO position after eight years away from overseeing daily operations of the company. He details the struggle to maintain the identity of Starbucks while attempting to branch out into areas such as music sales and hot food, facing competition and the oversaturation that caused the company the painful closing of about 600 stores in 2008. This is one of those turnaround stories that illustrates that a company can overcome its growth pains by returning to its core principles. --David Siegfried