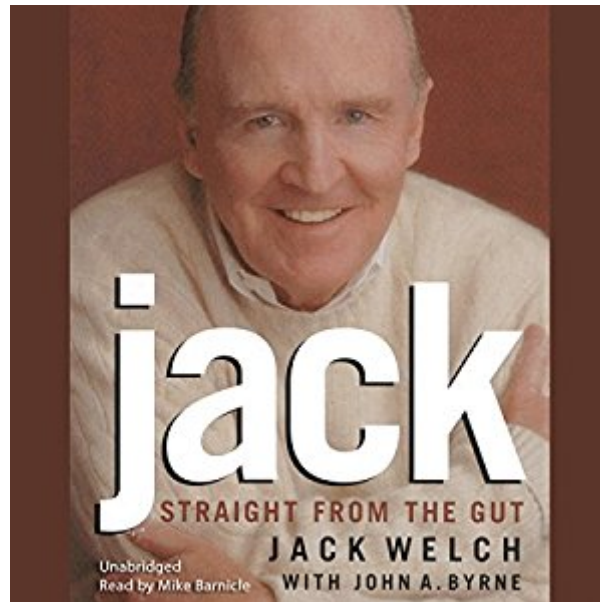




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Jack: Straight From The Gut



Synopsis

Nearly 20 years ago, former General Electric CEO Reg Jones walked into Jack Welch's office and wrapped him in a bear hug. "Congratulations, Mr. Chairman," said Reg. It was a defining moment for American business. So begins the story of a self-made man and a self-described rebel who thrived in one of the most volatile and economically robust eras in U.S. history, while managing to maintain a unique leadership style. In what is the most anticipated book on business management for our time, Jack Welch surveys the landscape of his career running one of the world's largest and most successful corporations. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book blurs the line between an autobiography, a corporate history book, and a management instructional; and it does it well. This has been one of the most engaging books on the subject matter, taking a relatively benign subject (how a hard working nobody become a CEO and superstar of an appliance and technology company), and makes it personable. The language isn't formal, academic, or even moderated. If you're offended by the occasional use of foul language, you'll be offended on a few occasions, Jack tells it how it is. He recounts his climb through the ranks of General Electric, and how he managed to create the vision that led to GE's success. The book is an autobiography, and there's not a lot of dissenting view points. While Jack does mention that some of his decisions were unpopular, and how some of his actions were flops, the analysis of why these ventures failed are always introspective. That doesn't allow for a complete picture of GE's history during Jack's tenure with the company, but for those of us who aren't working for (or competing

against) them, it suffices. More importantly, it's enjoyable. There are a few nuggets of wisdom (giving 'stretch' promotions at the beginning of a career, the No 1 / No 2 philosophy, encourage big swings and never punish a big miss) contained within the book, but it's not a management philosophy text book. You aren't likely to find any profound quotes or revelations contained in these pages; and if you can manage that expectation, then this book is a fantastic read.

I didn't expect too much from "Jack, straight from the gut." I had heard about Jack Welch management practices and controlling nature and figured I would hate the book. However, it was actually not as negative as I expected and at times I even enjoyed reading the book. The book is a biography from Jack Welch and thus follows the standard chronological form. It starts with his "early years" (chapter name) where Jack describes his childhood and relationship with his parents. From there he goes on about his study and how he joined GE and sort-of hated it because it was such a large and bureaucratic company. He describes his beginning years in GE quite quickly... that is how he got promoted again and again until finally he was in the race for the CEO. The majority of the book describes his years as the CEO, which I guess are the things the average reader wants to know about. As CEO, he describes the policies he put in place, the companies he bought and the programs he ran. The book confirmed my prejudices about Jack's management style. I found his focus on monetary rewards horrible. The A, B, C ranking a very unfortunate idea that many companies today have copied. His focus on buying on selling businesses uncomfortable. Yet, he manages to explain to himself why his decisions are good and human. But the book also showed an other side of Jack that I hadn't known. The relentless focus on good people and educating them (unfortunately, mostly managers). His effort on removing bureaucracy so that people can focus on actual work. And his attitude of sometimes diving deep in a business to really understand it instead of just managing the numbers. These sides of Jack surprised me and made the book a lot more interesting to me. Still, I wouldn't recommend the book quickly to others. It does cover a lot of stories very shallowly and it is hard to remember the names. The book could probably be smaller. Also, the book feels a bit too self-promoting at times. I guess the "I'm right!" is simply one of Jack's attitudes that is reflected in the book. Anyways, not a bad book, yet I wouldn't recommend it either. 3 stars.

I love Jack Welch's book. It has lots of actionable ideas for those in small business, as well as those in corporate America. This is not a puff piece book. It is straight talk. A worthwhile buy for those who want to improve their business performance.

Honestly, I ignored this book for years. Then in re-reading Warren Buffets annual letters I saw him say everyone should read it. On the Kindle reading list it went ...While I doubt I would have liked to work with Welch, he appears to have been a superb manager. In the book he walks through some of the processes and concepts he used to make his time at GE the raging success it was. I have a small company of less than 40 people to work with, and from time to time I was forced to stop and try to figure out how to make some of the ideas work in my situation. This book has made me a better manager. Just as importantly it walks through many lively situations around acquisitions, mergers, personell issues, and so forth, whose drama keep you engaged and learning by example. Buffet was right on this one -- everyone should read this if they have the smallest interest in readying. It's right up there with Andy Groves' book, "Only the Paranoid Survive".

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