



5 out of 5 Suns



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Atlas Shrugged

The Fifth in the Second series of: ***An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.***

Who is John Galt? He is the man who stopped the motor of the world. Why would someone ever do that? Who is John Galt...

Starbucks is officially branching into the retail music sales business. Howard Schultz, Chairman and Founder of the Home of the Green Mermaid has gone public with his plan to rule the world... sorry, I meant sell more stuff to the world. In addition to their tasty caffeinated elixir, you will be able to download MP3s and even burn your own custom CDs while you are waiting for the Barista to fill your request. I wonder how long it will be before they make a movie? Oh wait, they already did that... but we will talk about that next month ☺

Is it possible that a fictional novel written almost 50 years ago can teach us a valuable lesson in the world of business? I think the answer is a resounding YES!

In 1957 Ayn Rand authored a novel titled, Atlas Shrugged. This is a serious book that will require an investment of your time. All 1,069 pages just seem to stare you down, with a look that says, "You don't have what it takes to get through this one buddy." You know what though, you can and you will get through each and every thought provoking syllable. I promise that this will be the best time you spend with the printed word.

I want to get the religion/philosophy part out of the way first. Many people believe that Ayn Rand was a zealot opposed to religion with a philosophy of greed. Regardless of what you have

heard in the past, I ask that you put this all aside and read the novel for yourself and make your own judgment. I had heard nothing of Rand's philosophy until well after I completed this book for the second time. I poked around and decided that her philosophical thoughts and more importantly, the ramblings and ranting of the people who worship her, were not really what I was interested in. You can make it through this entire novel and grasp all of the positive take-aways and never even know who the heck Ayn Rand is!!!

The first time I read this novel, I was in awe. The second time I read the novel I decided that I had to leave the corporate world and make a name for myself out in the scary wilderness of business ownership. This story will make a person reevaluate their current situation so make sure you know what you are doing before you recommend this book to another person.

The story has a few main characters; most notably a lady named Dagny Taggart who is the first female to become the Operations Manager in charge of a major trans-continental railroad (remember, this is a fictional story). Dagny is driven to succeed no matter that the odds are stacked against her. She gets up early, works hard and goes home after everyone else in the office. Yet, even with all of this self-sacrificing effort, she can barely keep her head above water.

It turns out that the secondary characters in the book are more than happy to ride on other people's coattails and not really do any of the heavy-lifting. *(Hmm... do you know anyone like that?)*

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Because of this fact, many of the “producers” in the Country have decided to close up shop and stop doing business. Slowly but surely, the rest of the world starts to feel the squeeze as less and less actual work gets accomplished.

As you read this book, I encourage you to look both up and down your chain of command to understand who is playing which role within your own organization. I am sure that you will find that many of the newer faces in the workforce are more interested in what they can accomplish outside of the workplace rather than how to move the corporate train forward. Many of the older faces are tired and have had their fill of Corporate America. In all reality, there is nothing wrong with this. Many people “work to live” and simply help their company to garner the revenues required to keep the shareholders happy.

However, it is the people that “live to work” that will make your organization the best it can possibly be. “Living to work” is not a negative sentiment!!! People can have a wonderful home life and still come to work invigorated each day to put their best foot forward and try with their entire might to do the best job possible.

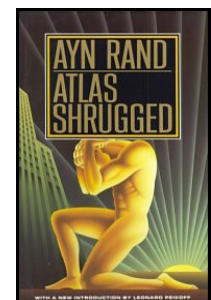
Atlas Shrugged teaches us that senior leaders should not take these people for granted. We should not let these people feel like they are unappreciated for even one second of one hour of one day. People who excel at their jobs are so few and far between, we should treat them like the stars that they are.

I honestly hope that you are in a position to throw this review right into the circular file because you have too many outstanding people working in your organization!!! However, if you are like most of the Corporate World, you are wondering where you are going to find your next true great hope.

It is tough to sum up 1,069 in a quick review. All I can say is that the lessons from this story heavily influence my own business and my dealings with others throughout my own life. There are so many outstanding lessons contained within this book that I am hesitant to attempt to limit them to just a few... but here goes anyway ☺

1. *Ask not what your business can do for you, but what you can do for your business.*
2. *Be sure that the people doing the work are recognized and appreciated or else you may find that they have disappeared.*

Just my opinion and we all know what “they” say about opinions...



Thanks
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