



Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business

By Richard Pascale, Mark Millemann, Linda Gioja

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Surfing the Edge of Chaos is a brilliant, powerful, and practical book about the parallels between business and nature—two fields that feature nonstop battles between the forces of tradition and the forces of transformation. It offers a bold new way of thinking about and responding to the personal and strategic challenges everyone in business faces these days.

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Download and Read Free Online **Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business** By Richard Pascale, Mark Millemann, Linda Gioja

Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this breakthrough business book, Pascale, Millemann and Gioja troll the emerging science of complexity for "ideas [that] can produce a concrete bottom-line impact." Extracting key "dynamics of survival" from the life sciences, these three management consultants successfully show business leaders how to turn their companies into agile and adaptable "living systems" that achieve long-term vitality and sustainability in a swiftly evolving environment. Their four "bedrock" principles are "Equilibrium is a precursor to death"; "Living things move toward the edge of chaos"; "Components of living systems self-organize" in response to turmoil; and "Living systems cannot be directed along a linear path." Writing with clarity and verve, the authors illustrate these larger points by comparing the functioning of organic systems (e.g., Yellowstone National Park), the behavior of organisms (dental plaque) and of insects (fire ants) with detailed case studies of five companies (British Petroleum, Hewlett-Packard, Monsanto, Royal Dutch/Shell and Sun Microsystems) and the U.S. Army. Practical-minded readers will appreciate their nitty-gritty insights into the relative advantages of "adaptive" and traditional "operational" leadership, as well as their consistent distillation of concrete business guidelines. While the authors aver that "there is no permanent victory in this eternal cycle of life and death," they make a persuasive case that "understanding living systems does not decisively win the game but, most assuredly, it improves the odds." (Nov. 1)

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Review

"Great storytelling, experience-based insight, and effortless prose."

—Christopher Meyer, Director, The Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Center for Business Innovation, and coauthor of **BLUR: The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy and Future Wealth**

"**Surfing the Edge of Chaos** is a breakthrough book . . . rendering subtle and complex ideas into readable prose by refracting the ideas through the prism of real-life organizations. This book will be must reading for any serious executive or student of organizational change."

—Warren Bennis, University Professor and Founding Chairman of the Leadership Institute, University of Southern California, and author of **Managing the Dream**

"**Surfing the Edge of Chaos** is an action plan for bringing organizations to life and life to organizations."

—Prof. Gary Hamel, author of *Leading the Revolution* and coauthor of *Competing for the Future*; Visiting Professor, London Business School; and Chairman of Strategos

"Grounded in both theory and practice, **Surfing the Edge of Chaos** helps any manager facing change to replace equilibrium and the status quo with innovation and self-renewal. The links drawn between the world of nature and the world of business form a particularly rich source of ideas for turning complexity and chaos into resolve and results."

—Dave Ulrich, Professor of Business, University of Michigan, and author of **Results-Based Leadership**

From the Inside Flap

Every few years a book changes the way people think about a field. In psychology there is Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*. In science, James Gleick's *Chaos*. In economics and finance, Burton Malkiel's *A Random Walk Down Wall Street*. And in business there is now **Surfing the Edge of Chaos** by Richard T. Pascale, Mark Millemann, and Linda Gioja.

Surfing the Edge of Chaos is a brilliant, powerful, and practical book about the parallels between business and nature -- two fields that feature nonstop battles between the forces of tradition and the forces of transformation. It offers a bold new way of thinking about and responding to the personal and strategic challenges everyone in business faces these days.

Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja argue that because every business is a living system (not just as metaphor but in reality), the four cornerstone principles of the life sciences are just as true for organizations as they are for species. These principles are:

Equilibrium is death.

Innovation usually takes place on the edge of chaos.

Self-organization and emergence occur naturally.

Organizations can only be disturbed, not directed.

Using intriguing, in-depth case studies (Sears Roebuck, Monsanto, Royal Dutch Shell, the U.S. Army, British Petroleum, Hewlett Packard, Sun Microsystems), **Surfing the Edge of Chaos** shows that in business, as in nature, there are no permanent winners. There are just companies and species that either react to change and evolve, or get left behind and become extinct.

Some examples:

Parallels between Yellowstone National Park and Sears show why equilibrium is a dangerous place in both nature and business.

How Monsanto used a "strange attractor" to move to the edge of chaos to alter its identity and transform its culture.

The unlikely story of how the U.S. Army embraced the ideas of self-organization and emergence.

Why the misapplication of linear logic (reengineering a business or attempting to eradicate predators in nature) will inevitably fail.

The stories in **Surfing the Edge of Chaos** are of pioneering efforts that show how the principles of living systems produce bottom-line impact and profound transformational change. What's really striking about them, though, is their reality. They are about success and failure, breakthroughs and dead-ends. In short, they are like the business you are in and the challenges you face.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Johanna Hernandez:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the free time or they will get lots of stress from both way of life and work. So , once we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not a robot. Then we question again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, often the book you have read will be Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business.

Jacqueline Gore:

Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business can be one of your nice books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The copy writer giving his/her effort to set every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business nevertheless doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource data that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can easily drawn you into new stage of crucial contemplating.

Karen Baskin:

This Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business is great guide for you because the content that is certainly full of information for you who have always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This particular book reveal it info accurately using great coordinate word or we can claim no rambling sentences inside it. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only gives you straight forward sentences but tricky core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business in your hand like finding the world in your arm, info in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no book that offer you world inside ten or fifteen tiny right but this book already do that. So , this is certainly good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt in which?

Lena Robertson:

This Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business is brand-new way for you who has fascination to look for some information as it relief your hunger of knowledge. Getting deeper you in it getting knowledge more you know or you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this Surfing the Edge of Chaos: The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business can be the light food for you because the information inside this kind of book is easy to get through anyone. These books create itself in the form which can be reachable by anyone, yeah I mean in the e-book application form. People who think that in reserve form make them feel drowsy even dizzy this reserve is the answer. So there is absolutely no in reading a guide especially this one. You can find what you are looking for. It should be here for anyone. So , don't miss that! Just read this e-book sort for your better life as well as knowledge.

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