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A Fine Line: How Design Strategies Are Shaping The Future Of Business



Synopsis

praise for a fine line "A breath of turbo-charged fresh air that doesn't regurgitate the ego-maniac CEO's selective memory or an outside expert's misinterpretations. Hartmut explains innovation through the lens of design, and it's about time we gained his valuable perspective." ;Guy Kawasaki, former chief evangelist, Apple and co-founder of Alltop.com "At Flextronics, we fell in love with Hartmut and frog, and their passion for bringing crazy great designs and design processes into the forefront of great product companies. We used their expertise to help our customers, many of the greatest product companies in the world, including Apple, HP, Cisco, Microsoft and others. It is a credit to Hartmut that in the midst of a shocking global recession, frog still sets quarterly revenue records. Theirs is a unique and fascinating story." ;Michael Marks, partner, Riverwood Capital LLC and former CEO, Flextronics "Hartmut's new approach to design is felt in every room in every house in every country and in every business around the world. He proved that thoughtful design is not only good for people but is good for business; and that both are interlinked. I have been fortunate to have observed first hand his impact at Sony, Apple, and HP; and have learned so much from him. He is an unsung hero of our times! A Fine Line is a must-read for designers and business people alike." ;Satjiv Chahil, senior vice president, Hewlett-Packard "A fascinating, breathtaking, and exemplary insight into a success story that never had so much topicality, and so much informative potential as just now. Esslinger offers an honest and encouraging portrait of the incredible power of the business and design alliance. A Fine Line is a handbook of design expertise and the art of business at its best, showing a variety of radical solutions and fresh new ideas." ;Professor Dr Peter Zec, president, ICSID and founder, red dot awards

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Customer Reviews

The book is more focused on why Frog is so great and how they managed to get some of their accounts. I thought I could get a glimpse of where they got their inspiration and how they turned it into products that sell, but there was none of that. I admire the author's success, and even though he tries to open up and show you how he did it, the book is more about business than design.

In *A Fine Line* Hartmut Esslinger gives forward-thinking insight into building a company's creative culture. The book allows you to crawl inside the mind of frog design's founder who held the fate of major brands like Disney and Sony in his hands. It effectively reveals Hartmut's approach to unique business solutions and the influence of design on corporate strategy. What I enjoyed most about the book's revelations, aside from providing key design and innovation wisdom, are the honest and humanistic anecdotes that Hartmut offers about his experiences working with Apple, cultivating a growing design firm, and pushing brands to take risks and move beyond the "norm." Inspiring to say the least.

Hartmut has one or two "off" chapters, but otherwise this is a genius book showing genuine insight to industry and what it takes to stick out from the crowd. How to attack design instead of being complacent. A very good read.

This is not the book I expected from a world class design company. I was looking for detail on their process of innovation and what I found was a soapbox presentation on "Green" design. This was intertwined with hints about companies that didn't use frog's recommendations to their demise. Much of it was a pitch about why you should use frog design and what might happen if you don't.

The first couple of chapters are pretty dry and more about his company history, but after that is full of inspiring thoughts and ideas. You will see the world differently after finish the book. One thing though. Essinger is such a great visionary. There are so many thoughts in this book that scream for more explicit detail discussion. I hope he has the second book.

This book, while a little short is something that every designer should read. This book along with

Design Forward point out how just how small of a total vision most designers have in respect to the product they are designing. Not just that particular item but also where the materials come from, the influence the factory has on the surrounding area, what happens after its used and so on. Short but excellent read.

I really liked "A fine line". Harmut Esslinger shares his experience and insights gathered during all his career. His wisdom about "selectivity" explained as a key career success is one the most useful advice I found in the book. He is very convincing in his field, the industrial design, a bit less when it comes to digital design. But still A Fine Line is worth reading, as it is rare to access so directly to the thinking of great "design achievers" such as Harmut Esslinger.

I bought this book in hope that I would get an insider perspective into the design field thinking about switching from architecture to design. What I found was that the tone of this book was less instructional than I had hoped and more self promoting. I was not impressed and didn't finish reading.

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