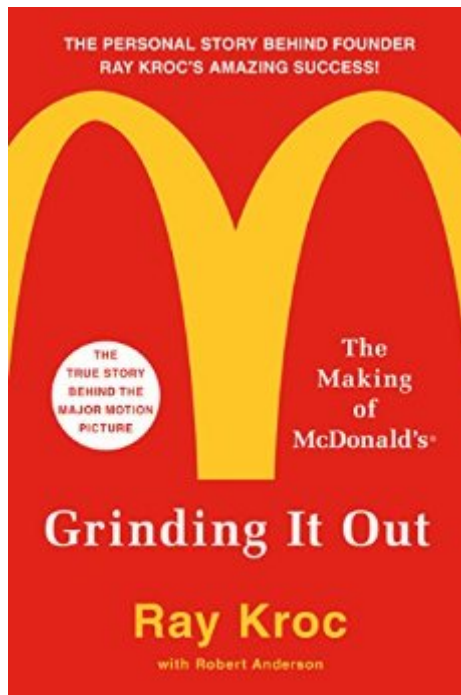


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Grinding It Out: The Making Of McDonald's



Synopsis

"He either enchants or antagonizes everyone he meets. But even his enemies agree there are three things Ray Kroc does damned well: sell hamburgers, make money, and tell stories." --from Grinding It Out

Few entrepreneurs can claim to have radically changed the way we live, and Ray Kroc is one of them. His revolutions in food-service automation, franchising, shared national training, and advertising have earned him a place beside the men and women who have founded not only businesses, but entire empires. But even more interesting than Ray Kroc the business man is Ray Kroc the man. Not your typical self-made tycoon, Kroc was fifty-two years old when he opened his first franchise. In *Grinding It Out*, you'll meet the man behind McDonald's, one of the largest fast-food corporations in the world with over 32,000 stores around the globe. Irrepressible enthusiast, intuitive people person, and born storyteller, Kroc will fascinate and inspire you on every page.

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Customer Reviews

Go into McDonald's today, and you see a complex, well-operated business system operated by

ordinary people. That is impressive in and of itself. What is even more impressive is to understand the roots of how this business was established, which you can do by reading this entertaining and revealing book. Unlike most people who write about themselves and their businesses, Ray Kroc was pretty candid about the problems he had, the people who gave him a hard time, the mistakes he made, and his personal life. That makes this book very valuable to those who want to understand what entrepreneurship is all about. As an adjunct to reading this book, I suggest that you also visit the McDonald's museum near O'Hare airport in Ray Kroc's first store. There are notes there about all of the problems that he had to solve over the years, many of which are described in the book. Ray Kroc did not invent the original McDonald's concept, but what he franchised and eventually bought from the McDonald brothers was not yet a real business system. For example, when he first tried to duplicate the french fries that were so famous in San Bernardino, California, his french fries turned to mush. It turned out that the storage methods used by the McDonald brothers aged and dehydrated the potatoes a bit so that they could fry up nicely. Kroc had to invest in finding a process for doing that outside of the near-desert climate of San Bernardino. The McDonald's system that we see today is the creation of Kroc's attention to detail, appreciation for consumer value, ability to solve problems, taking calculated risks that he could not afford to lose, and attracting talented people into the system. The book gives you a great sense of what that was like.

This is the autobiography of one of the great entrepreneurs of the 20C. If only for that, it is worth the read of anyone who is interested in understanding business or the fast-food industry. For all his earthy common sense and lack of formal education, the system that Kroc set up can only be described as a work of genius. After all, McDonald's at the moment has surpassed Coca Cola as the most recognized brand in the world: it serves nearly 45 million people every day, commands unparalleled influence in every related industry, and often serves as the symbol of the US itself. The great strength of this book is that you get Kroc's view of what makes himself tick: he devoted himself relentlessly to a single business purpose within the capitalist system, was open to suggestions from talent that he cultivated regarding that purpose, and adapted it as he needed to thrive. It is a remarkable story of a man who re-made himself many times, and began what became the McDonald's corporation in his 50s! You simply have to respect what he accomplished at a time when most men would have given up. The pillars of his business model are well known: 1) it is more an ecosystem of separate companies that grow together with long-term bonds of trust and the highest standards of professional conduct; 2) it pursues operational efficiency while refusing to compromise safety and cleanliness; 3) it is adept at finding innovations pioneered by both its

suppliers and owner-operators and then disseminating them into the system; 4) it sticks to its core competency - hamburger and fries - and with few exceptions listens to consumers. That is about it, really, in an idealist version, but it explains why the company's many competitors failed to grow as big and fast.

Ray Kroc's success story is quite a record of persistence and achievement. He didn't invent the McDonald's chain (as many erroneously believe) but he knew a winner when he saw one and he negotiated to buy the business. He truly believed that McDonald's could be a huge, global operation if it was promoted right and run with an emphasis on quality, customer service, cleanliness, and value. These four attributes made the acronym "QSCV", and it was something that Ray Kroc preached to his people every single day. Ray Kroc shows his confidence throughout the book, not just with business, but also in his personal life. He pursued his business dreams with unmatched vigor, and he was equally determined to reach his personal goals. His relentless courtship of Joni, his one true love, is one of the highlights of the book. It's fun listening to Kroc spill his heart out, telling the reader all sorts of details about his personal life. He was absolutely ga- ga over his beloved Joni, and he shows no embarrassment in admitting his feelings. Here was a man who had the world in his hands, a senior citizen who was head of a large corporation, and yet he was completely, hopelessly in love and willing to give it all up for his number one lady. He was having trouble sleeping, and couldn't concentrate on work anymore. He was like a starry-eyed teenager, always in a daydream-like state, fantasizing about the woman he loved. He was prepared to do virtually anything to capture her heart. Kroc was an outspoken and egotistical man, and these personality traits pop up throughout the book. He blew his top several times, when things didn't go his way or when someone would make a negative comment about McDonald's, and he could often be quite profane and a little vile.

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