



Quicklet on Howard Schultz's Pour Your Heart into It: How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time (CliffNotes-like Book Summary and Analysis)

Michelle Fogus

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Coffee without people is a theoretical construct. People without coffee are somewhat diminished as well.”
Dave Olsen, as quoted by Howard Schultz

The Starbucks story is a contemporary fairy tale beloved by investors and latte-lovers alike . Once upon a time, it goes, there was a charming little store near Seattle’s Pike Place Market, with an old wooden counter and some coffee bins. A very few discriminating coffee drinkers bought their beans there. Ten years later, it was . . . well, five stores that sold high-quality bulk coffee beans to a few more discriminating coffee drinkers. Then Howard Schultz entered the picture. Today Starbucks has over 16,000 stores: But more than that, it’s the very seat of coffee magic. Starbucks changed the way Americans talk about and experience coffee. And Howard Schultz is the wizard who made it happen.

In *Pour Your Heart into It*, Schultz tells the story of how a unique business philosophy shaped Starbucks from the mid-’80s into the mid-’90s, transforming not only the coffee experience in America, but the business landscape as well. It’s a philosophy built around a couple of core ideas: every business should “stand for something”—in this case, the uncompromising quality of the coffee, and a business can treat its employees with respect, and take care of its employees, and still be highly successful; and in fact, it’s the only right way to succeed, according to Schultz.

It’s clear that Schultz hopes to inspire other corporate leaders with this book. It’s less a prescription for success than an exhortation to corporate America: Hey, have a heart! Stop treating employees purely as an expense that detracts from the bottom line and start understanding that they are the business in a very real sense. A business that invests in its employees and treats them well will see them become enthusiastic “ambassadors.” If you take it a step further, as Starbucks did, and give them an actual ownership stake in the company, they will work as hard as they can to make sure it succeeds.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

We gradually accepted the fact that we had to adapt the store to our customers’ needs,” he says, and learn how to balance customer requests and desires with his vision—but at the same time, not make too many compromises and wind up diluting the integrity of either the coffee itself or the romance of the coffee experience.

In 1987, not long after Schultz opened his third *Il Giornale* store, Jerry Baldwin and Gordon Bowker decided to sell Starbucks. Bowker was ready to focus on other things, and Baldwin felt he needed to focus on running Peet’s.

To Schultz it was fate: of course he would buy Starbucks. But some of his investors came up with their own

plan to buy it and, he was convinced, give him a much smaller role. Schult had to go to his remaining investors with an alternate plan. Most of them bought in, and soon he had the money needed to purchase Starbucks.

A mere five years after moving to Seattle to work on marketing for Starbucks, Howard Schultz had become its owner, and there were no longer any barriers to his vision of grand expansion.

PART TWO: REINVENTING THE COFFEE EXPERIENCE: The private years, 1987-1992

Act Your Dreams with Open Eyes

When Schultz stepped back into Starbucks, this time in his new role as owner, one of the biggest challenges facing him was poor morale. He knew that addressing it had to be his first task. But he also needed to hire more experienced management: both he and Dave Olsen (who had been managing the Il Giornale stores) had limited experience, and certainly wouldn't be able to handle the planned expansion to 125 new stores over the next five years.

Meanwhile, with the merging of Il Giornale and Starbucks, there was also an opportunity to revisit the logo.

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