

BOOK REVIEW

An Interpreneur's Journey: The Birth of a New Economy Business

By Tom Eckmann

For Immediate Release:

Every year more than half a million people start a new business. And sometimes it seems like an equal number of people write books describing how to do it. Unfortunately, most of these books are colorless compendiums of rules, checklists, and hard-to-follow advice. Few help the novice entrepreneur understand what the startup experience is like or how to put the information to work. *An Interpreneur's Journey* by Tom Eckmann (Absolute Business Press) offers a refreshing alternative to these “user-unfriendly” guides.

This book introduces the startup process through the eyes of a first-time entrepreneur and describes what he goes through each step of the way—the doubts and uncertainties, the family and financial pressures, and the problems that even experienced entrepreneurs run into. The book is further distinguished by its focus on Internet entrepreneurs—*Interpreneurs*—who the author defines as everyday people with few technical skills who are using the Internet to start new businesses and reinvent old ones.

The main character, Bill Partridge, is laid off from a job he's had for 14 years. He knows little about starting or running a business, but when he finds few job opportunities, he decides to take a chance. He starts a contracting company selling and installing in-floor radiant heating systems. He's a smart guy and does the right things, but despite his best efforts, profits elude him. He's almost out of money and ready to hang it up when he makes an important discovery—he can sell his systems on the Internet and reach a much bigger market. He re-invents his business and finds success selling kits to people all over the country.

An Interpreneur's Journey is very readable and the characters believable. Dialog and illustrations are used to introduce important business concepts, making them interesting and easier to understand. For example, readers learn about business financial statements in a lively exchange between Bill and his accountant; while this topic is among the most boring on earth, the format adds life and clarity to the explanation. Wisely, the author has moved some of the more complex discussions to the book's website; by doing so he's avoided bogging down the storyline while still making the material available to those who are interested. Overall, readers will find themselves drawn into the story and rooting for Bill to succeed.

At the end of each chapter is a startup guide which summarizes the key steps involved in starting a business. What makes this guide particularly useful is that it doesn't deal with mundane startup issues such as getting a business license; instead it deals with more strategic issues such as how to define a target market. There are also many references to the book's website which contains additional tips, planning tools and other information for first-time *Interpreneurs*.

The author, Tom Eckmann, is a seasoned entrepreneur who is well versed in both new and old economy businesses. He has started and sold several successful companies and helped dozens of other entrepreneurs start and grow theirs. In this book he provides a first-hand look at the startup experience and describes many lessons he's learned.

An Interpreneur's Journey is a unique addition to the genre of business startup books. It follows in the tradition of *The E-Myth* by Michael Gerber, *The Goal* by Eliyahu Goldratt, and a handful of other books that have successfully used fiction to communicate complex business ideas. The book is particularly timely because it speaks to the rapidly growing number of people who have been outsourced, off-shored or otherwise victimized by our “jobless recovery.” Many of them are seeking refuge from unemployment by starting their own business. This book offers useful insights and points them in the right direction.

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