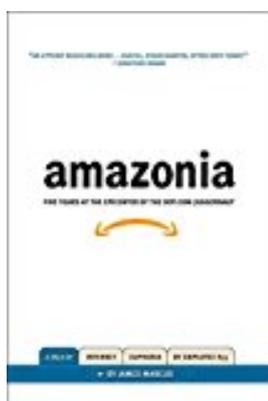


[PDF] Amazonia: Five Years At The Epicenter Of The Dot.Com Juggernaut

James Marcus - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

With *Amazonia*, James Marcus adds to the ever-simmering stew of Amazon.com analysis a new, almost quaint perspective: that of an employee hired for his expertise in literature. Marcus traces the company's familiar climb, plummet, and re-ascent, but this time we witness the pyrotechnics from the book-strewn hallways of the editorial department.

After an abbreviated heyday, editorial talent lost cachet at the burgeoning Internet behemoth, replaced by metrics worship and automated innovations like "truncating widgets." Despite the demoralizing shift, Marcus makes evident the loyalty editors continued to display, a "quasi-religious devotion" almost impossible to explain to outsiders." The concept of making history was just too intoxicating for most to abandon (as were the stock options).

Marcus's writing has enough genuine humor and self-deprecation to squelch any accusations of "optimizing for optics," or worse, whining. Aside from a few sections that feel somewhat adrift (oblique mentions of an imploding marriage and an extended Emerson sidebar) the prose is driving and the voice engaging and remarkably fair.

For anyone who worked at Amazon.com in the early days, reading *Amazonia* is akin to leafing through a high school yearbook (I was an Amazon editor from 1997-2002). Nostalgia is inescapable--even for the irritations of the time, like All Hands Meetings (pep rallies) and the exaltation of MBAs (the popular kids). The thing about yearbooks, though, is that we're really only interested in our own. Whether outsiders will be as captivated by this surf down virtual memory lane is questionable. For alums, it's a lasting keepsake. --*Brangien Davis*

From Publishers Weekly With Amazon.com firmly established as one of the leaders in e-commerce, it is easy to forget the company's early roots as a struggling online bookstore. Marcus, who was employee 55 and one of Amazon's first editors, provides a captivating, witty account of how the fledgling e-retailer transformed itself from a startup that generated \$16 million in sales in 1996 to a behemoth with revenue of \$5.3 billion in 2003. The early days of Amazon, Marcus recounts, were full of a do-it-yourself attitude, with everyone at the company encouraged to try different ways to drive customers to the site. In Marcus's case, it was writing and assigning reviews, the content designed to make people decide what to buy. But although Amazon founder Jeff Bezos began as a firm believer in the power of content, his philosophy gradually changed to what Marcus calls the "culture of metrics," in which everything connected to the site could be measured. And as Amazon added more and more products, the importance of content slipped away. It's clear Marcus's most satisfying time at Amazon was in the early years, even if that meant picking and packing books during the holiday rush. There is even a bit of nostalgia in his tone, which people in the book industry can especially appreciate: once upon a time there was a company whose employees scrambled to sell books over this new thing called the Internet. Today the company has become a software and retailing machine dedicated to selling as many widgets as efficiently as possible. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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