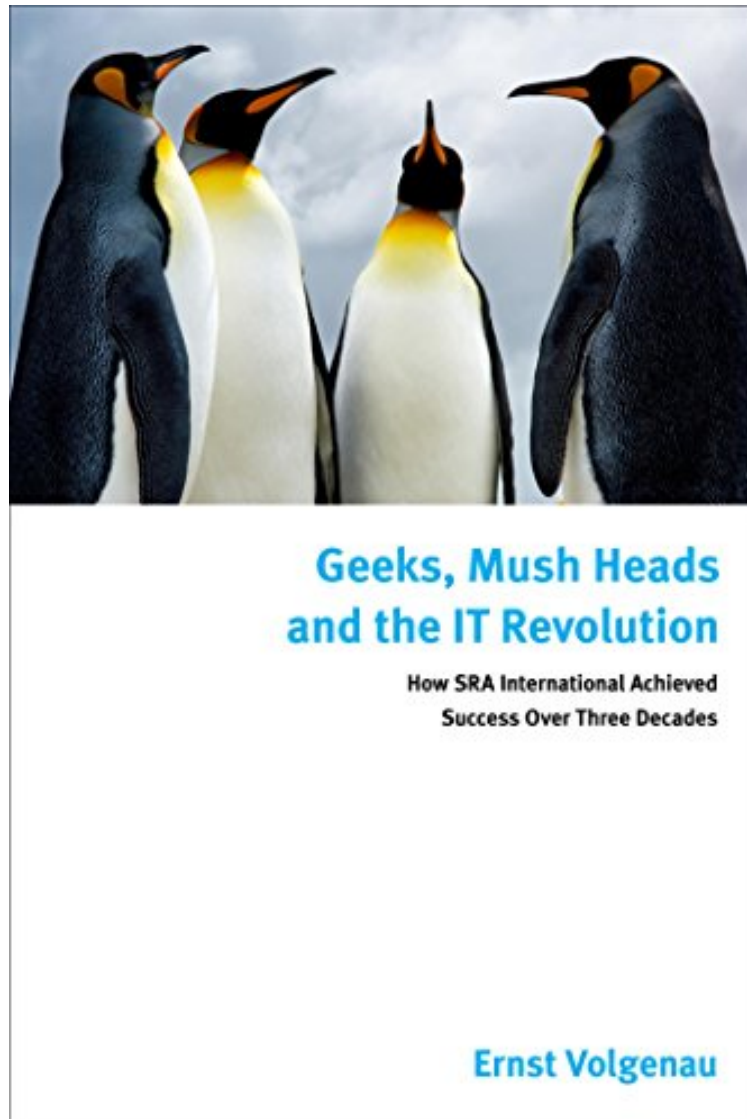


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Geeks, Mush Heads and the IT Revolution: How SRA International Achieved Success over Nearly Four Decades

Ernst Volgenau

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Ernst Volgenau : Geeks, Mush Heads and the IT Revolution: How SRA International Achieved Success over Nearly Four Decades before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Geeks, Mush Heads and the IT Revolution: How SRA International Achieved Success over Nearly Four Decades:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An honest discussion of the history of a company By D. OppenheimerI spent 16 years at SRA from 1983 to 1999 and this was such a great trip down memory lane. This is a

good tale of how a small studies company bloomed into a technical powerhouse, lost it's way for a time and then got back on track. I was always proud of our company's ethics and high standards and that comes through pretty strongly in the book. It's why people stayed for as long as they did. Other company's had much higher turnover rates at the time but SRA's focus on people and doing important work for important clients made work something to look forward to. Dr. Volegnau's very candid discussions of errors made is refreshing to say the least. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The One Book All Future Company Founders Should Read Before Starting Their Own Company By Stephen W Comiskey A straightforward recollection and telling of the insights and the good moves and the not-so-good moves of the author's more than forty year career beginning with the founding and then the running of a Government Contracting business that grew to eventually be publicly traded and then to be purchased by a private equity fund and taken private again and whose next step is yet to be determined. Dr. Ernst Volgenau shares his reasons why he made the choices that he did along the way and he honors and names many of those SRA employees who made the Company an exemplary one to work for and to partner with the U.S. Government. The author also gives his distillation of what are the lessons learned (the take aways another would be company founder should know) from the position of hindsight; and he pulls no punches on his grading of his own and of his SRA executive team's decisions along the way. My only negative is that I would have preferred the Lessons Learned Chapter in the front, as opposed to the rear, of the book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Read: Geeks, Mush Heads, and the IT Revolution By ekp As a 30-year employee, it was both interesting and fun to read the history of SRA -- most of which I experienced, though obviously not to the extent covered in the book. The book is well written and provides numerous lessons learned for management of other companies in today's environment.

SRA International grew from one person in his home basement to more than 7,000 people and nearly \$2 billion in revenue in thirty years. The firm was profitable, revenue increased every year, and it became highly admired for its values and culture. SRA was on the Fortune list of 100 Best Places to Work in America for ten consecutive years. The company's initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange was the sixth most successful in 2002, and the price of its stock soared. Then, at the height of success, the top management team changed twice, growth declined, the firm made a bad acquisition, and the market it served began to decrease. SRA was sold to a private equity firm. The new owners (including the founder and author of this book) hired a dynamic young CEO who implemented changes designed to restore values, culture, and business success. As this account ends, the market was challenging, but the outlook was promising. This book describes the lessons learned through varied phases: startup, rapid growth, changes in leadership, business problems, privatization; and it explains how high ethics and a sense of service to customers, employees, and society led to a very special company. Its intended audience is business professionals in emerging and established companies and for current and former employees and friends.

SRA is an outstanding company, dedicated to high ethics and care for customers and employees. I highly recommend this history for its lessons learned in creating an excellent example for corporate America. (General David C. Jones, former chairman, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Air Force) A fascinating history of SRA International's four decades of growth, challenges, and success driven by a brilliant, hardworking, and high-minded farm boy with a blooming ingrained talent for leadership, team building, and commitment to serve customers and employees. A must read for those with an interest in entrepreneurship. (William A. Anders, Apollo astronaut and former CEO of General Dynamics) Having served on the boards of startups as well as attending over 500 board meetings of Fortune 100 companies, I only wish this book had been written years earlier. It could have saved my employers a lot of money (and myself a lot of scar tissue!). (Norman Augustine, creator and CEO of Lockheed Martin, leader of national studies for the President and Secretary of Defense) If you want to know what it's really like to start a business, grow it from small to big, and how to confront serious transitions and challenges along the way, you can get it all from this very readable and candid book about one of the most successful firms in the field. (Charles Rossotti, former head of the Internal Revenue Service, entrepreneur) This is the story of Ernst Volgenau's unrelenting belief that culture and values define the core around which a firm is built, grows, and prospers. "Honesty and service" drove customer and employee satisfaction, and ultimately shareholder value. We need more leaders who understand the importance of a company's culture to its long-term success. (Steven A. Denning, chairman, General Atlantic Partners; chairman, Stanford University Board of Trustees) I worked with Ernst in the McNamara Pentagon in the late 1960s and recall when he started SRA. I was a competitor and saw SRA at close hand for at least twenty years; a great company with a strong culture, aggressive and tough, yet very ethical and fair. They were leaders in applying IT to the business and operational challenges of DoD and many civil agencies. Today's CEOs can learn many lessons from this book. (Phillip Odeen, former CEO, TRW) SRA International grew from one person in his home basement to more than 7,000 people and nearly \$2 billion in revenue in thirty years. The firm was profitable, revenue increased every year, and it became highly admired for its values and culture. SRA was on the Fortune list of 100 Best Places to Work in America for ten consecutive years. This book describes the lessons learned through varied phases: startup, rapid growth, changes in leadership, business problems, privatization; and it explains how high ethics and a sense of

service to customers, employees, and society led to a very special company. About the Author Ernst Volgenau has a wealth of management and educational experience. A Naval Academy graduate and a PhD in engineering from UCLA, he spent twenty years in the Air Force attaining the rank of colonel, headed the Office of Inspection and Enforcement at the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and then founded and led SRA as CEO for twenty-seven years and remained chairman for the rest of the time covered by the history in this book. Not relying solely on his own judgment, the author collected the perspectives of others who had helped build the firm.