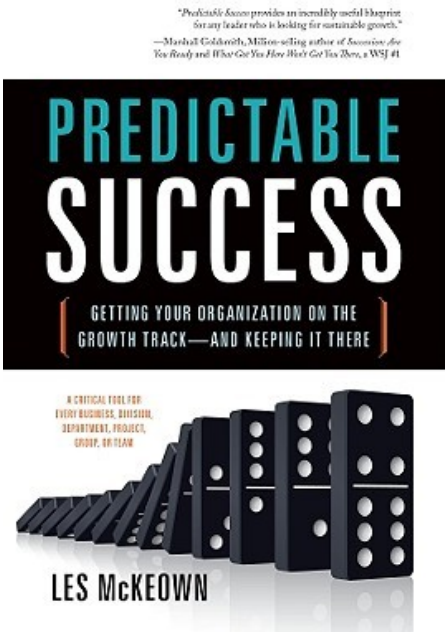

Predictable Success: Getting Your Organization on the Growth Track--And Keeping It There

Les McKeown

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Predictable Success: Getting Your Organization on the Growth Track--And Keeping It There Les McKeown
No matter where a company fits on the author's evolutionary path, this book will enable managers to restore equilibrium, reignite confidence, and move the company forward to unprecedented growth. It combines market positioning and management analysis. The author uses case studies, action points, and penetrating insights to illuminate the path to success. He is a highly experienced entrepreneur and consultant. A leading advisor to large and small businesses around the world, the author has launched and managed over forty businesses.

Predictable Success: Getting Your Organization on the Growth Track--And Keeping It There Details

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Simon says

This book was really helpful in understanding the life cycle of a business in advance, preparing you for what's to come when you're starting out in business is priceless. Well written, and some good diagrams illustrate the text. If you are or are thinking of becoming an entrepreneur you should read this book sooner rather than later (especially the bit about white water rafting, you'll be glad you did!)

Mary Louise says

Even an art geek beginner entrepreneur can understand this one. My husband and I have devoured this book. Clarity, that's Les McKeown's gift, and by all standards, that makes him a gift-giver too. We need more like him in business.

Alex Devero says

Every organization can consistently meet its goals, regardless of size, age or finances. It isn’t a question of luck, but rather a matter of carefully following a step-by-step process.

Anna says

This book shows how to identify and manage the various growth stages of a business. It has more to do with management and organizational culture than starting a business per se, but nonetheless useful for the author's substantial experience as an entrepreneur and consultant to start-ups.

Riley says

I thought this book had a great set of concepts and organizational themes that I will definitely have with me as a reference for the duration of my career. Seeing the life cycle of an organization, and looking at it through the lens of other areas such as my family, is something that was very practical for me. I’ve really enjoyed spending time thinking about which stage I’m in regarding two main areas; my work habits and my marriage.

Part 1 was not the most entertaining to me because it was a bit repetitive though it was educational and I fully grasp the complete picture of each stage. Part 2 was especially insightful because of the charts that make it so easy to tie it all together, with figure 11.4 on page 192 being my favorite by far.

Noticing that “decisions are made without the decision-making process placing a burden on the organization” (23) and “Mediocrity, willful underperformance and simple shirking of responsibility stands out so clearly that the underperforming individual has few places to hide” (27) makes me feel so blessed to work in the freedom that I do. Within the freedom to grow is the freedom to fail.

The reason the organization declines into Treadmill is not because of the overreliance on systems and processes per se; it is because of the resulting loss of knowledge, ability and flexibility on the part of the users of those systems and processes – the organization’s employees.
Page 163, 4th paragraph

In Predictable Success, employees take responsibility for outcomes. In Treadmill, they take responsibility for actions. In Predictable success, employees hold themselves accountable for results; in Treadmill, for compliance.
Page 182, 3rd paragraph

One major thing I’ve been doing and will continue to do is determine where I lie on the organizational graph and take steps towards Predictable Success. I know that right now, at work and at home, I’m coming out of a season of Fun and am currently in Whitewater. On page 63 McKeown writes “the whole purpose of systems and processes is to enable an organization to deal effectively with complexity.” As my job is getting more complex, I have not up until this point taken the necessary steps to put the right processes in place to deal with it. Getting the right structure in my life has been something I’ve wrestled with for years now, and I’m more motivated than ever to mitigate my weaknesses with awareness and a passion to grow and to best serve the church, the people at my campus and my wife. After reading this book, and with my word for the year being consistency and fasting for direction and discipline, I think I am on the right path to getting myself into Predictable Success.

E says

Informative guide to organizational growth or recovery

Entrepreneur and CEO Les McKeown prefaces his book with a tale of discovery – the story of how he uncovered the “Predictable Success” model. The personal anecdotes he shares in this section demonstrate his humility, as well as his bona fides. Perhaps more important for a book that aspires to show organizations both what they are (he says that every organization moves through a specific life cycle) and what they can be (every organization can stay in the best phase, called Predictable Success), McKeown trots out a fine writing style. Most chapters present a compelling, detailed anecdote that illustrates his principles, a feature that gives the book a nice utility. Leaders who learn through stories will find this guide as useful as leaders who prefer lean, jargon-free business prose do. And, though the book is somewhat repetitive and it fizzles out in the last chapter, McKeown’s points are clear. This author knows companies: how they look on the way up and how they look on the way down. getAbstract recommends his unpredictably fresh perspective on something every business wants more of – Predictable Success.

To learn more about this book, check out the following link: https://www.getabstract.com/summary/1...

Carolyn Monaco says

Fantastic high-level yet on-the-ground conversation that quickly diagnosis any business, anywhere, on a 7-point "lifecycle" model...and advises exactly what to do next for fastest success. I learned that "the business of managing of a business" can be simple and intuitive. I learned that getting advice from someone who is truly an expert is invaluable. And I learned that there are fast, powerful ways to move a business forward.

Jamie Notter says

Excellent, excellent book. The way it clarifies the challenges that companies face--depending on where they are in the growth cycle--was illuminating, both for my own organization and the clients I serve. I highly recommend it.

Jeff says

Great book on the life cycle of organizations and how to stay in the success cycle. Some takeaways:

If you don't have the right people, it's only a matter of time before the money runs out.

There are 7 stages of organizational development
1. Early Struggle
2. Fun
3. Whitewater
4. Predictable Success
5. Treadmill
6. The Big Rut
7. Death Rattle

Organizations who achieve and stay in Predictable Success exhibit 5 main characteristics:
1. Decision-making. The ability to readily and consistently implement decisions.
2. Goal-setting.
3. Alignment. Structure, process and people are in harmony.
4. Accountability. Employees are accountable to themselves and others.
5. Ownership. Employees take personal responsibility for their actions and outcomes.

The single most powerful characteristic of the Predictable Success organization is the existence of a culture of self-accountability. Everyone from senior management to truck drivers have a strong sense of self-accountability toward their own and their teams's responsibilities.

You should finish every day by answering this question: What did we do today that took us closer to finding a viable market for our product or service?

The only way you'll find out if the market wants your product is through experimentation.

Hubris is a killer in Early Struggle. Accept this and you will get to viability much quicker.

"The only way to change people's minds is with consistency." Jack Welch

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Lori Grant says

A must-read book on management for knowledge workers, managers, executives, and entrepreneurs.

Nick says

Great framework. I've been in the whitewater stage a while now and gives some clarity both in terms of understanding this is normal, and how to get out of it. I've also been part of organizations in the treadmill phase, and found that concept very fitting.

Matt Adair says

Tremendously clear overview of the life cycles of organizations - incredibly timely and helpful as I review the past year and look ahead to helping lead our church towards predictable success in 2013.

This is an important read for church planters and pastors at any stage of their church's organizational development.

Jordan says

This book was much more geared toward start up companies than I thought. For me, someone who is a manager in an established, medium to large size company, the first 76 pages didn't apply to me. But if you are starting up a company, this would mean a lot more to you then me. Part two on getting to predictable success and staying there was much more interesting. I found the section on staying at the peak the most enlightening section of the whole book. This makes me want to read the other Les McKeown book, The Synergist.

Sherrie Rohde says

I work at a startup and am involved with other companies that are transitioning out of that phase. This book made everything going on around me so much clearer as I can now understand and identify the different stages of the business life cycle the companies around me, and especially the one I'm at, are in. Not only that but I now know what predictable success looks like, how to get there, and how to stay there. Unlike many business books, Les' writing style holds my focus as it is full of personal stories of not only his own experience but also those companies he's worked with. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone.

Mark says

This book concisely lays out a compelling framework for understanding the overall issues of increasing complexity as an organization grows, and provides some useful insight into resolving those issues. An excellent book for anyone suffering from the growing pains of a small company turning big, or for someone watching a successful company suffer as it's strangled by the very drive toward systemization that allowed it to overcome the complexity that comes with being big.

I had the good fortune of hearing Les McKeown speak, and I think the book might have read a little better if he had let his sense of humor shine through a bit more.