



Red Teaming: How Your Business Can Conquer the Competition by Challenging Everything

Bryce G Hoffman

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Red Teaming is a revolutionary new way to make critical and contrarian thinking part of the planning process of any organization, allowing companies to stress-test their strategies, flush out hidden threats and missed opportunities and avoid being sandbagged by competitors.

Today, most -- if not all -- established corporations live with the gnawing fear that there is another Uber out there just waiting to disrupt their industry. Red Teaming is the cure for this anxiety. The term was coined by the U.S. Army, which has developed the most comprehensive and effective approach to Red Teaming in the world today in response to the debacles of its recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the roots of Red Teaming run very deep: to the Roman Catholic Church's "Office of the Devil's Advocate," to the *Kriegsspiel* of the Prussian General Staff and to the secretive AMAN organization, Israel's Directorate of Military Intelligence. In this book, author Bryce Hoffman shows business how to use the same techniques to better plan for the uncertainties of today's rapidly changing economy.

Red Teaming is both a set of analytical tools and a mindset. It is designed to overcome the mental blind spots and cognitive biases that all of us fall victim to when we try to address complex problems. The same heuristics that allow us to successfully navigate life and business also cause us to miss or ignore important information. It is a simple and provable fact that we do not know what we do not know. The good news is that, through Red Teaming, we can find out.

In this book, Hoffman shows how the most innovative and disruptive companies, such as Google and Toyota, already employ some of these techniques organically. He also shows how many high-profile business failures, including those that sparked the Great Recession, could easily have been averted by using these approaches. Most importantly, he teaches leaders how to make Red Teaming part of their own planning process, laying the foundation for a movement that will change the way America does business.

Red Teaming: How Your Business Can Conquer the Competition by Challenging Everything Details

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From Reader Review Red Teaming: How Your Business Can Conquer the Competition by Challenging Everything for online ebook

Josiah says

My best business book of the year so far.

Jennifer says

I really liked this book and its methods. This is a set of skills I want to get better at doing. I know I will be better at everything if I can master the concepts.

Fred Leland says

If you want to ensure you are covering all aspects of your plan or course of action red teaming is the way to go. The book covers red teaming history it's methodology and offers tools to enhance sound decision making. Red teaming is a great way to ready and prepare your organization. I highly recommend this book!

Billy Taylor says

Good read that every change agent should have on their shelf. It challenges and helps identify numerous biases both in yourself and in the environment.

Several of the tools I learned and used through my MBA experience, but some had a different twist. All were either a good refresher or useful. More illustrations and explanation of some processes and tools would have been helpful. I could easily see this book being used as a guide to a 2 or 3 day immersion course on red teaming skills and capabilities.

I used the pre mortem analysis before I even finished the book.

Mark says

I wasn't sure at the beginning of the book, with the heavy focus at the start on military red teaming, how it would be applicable to corporate America - was I ever wrong! Excellent book that moves you through the process of determining how/when to red team, the pitfalls, when to stop. I am re-reading the book to put it into use at work - truly an excellent resource.

Nathan Albright says

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by Jellybooks. All thoughts and opinions are my own.]

This book fits nobly within a tradition of business books that seek to turn insights gained by the military to those which can be used by businesses engaged in only slightly less serious competition in hostile environments. This is by no means a new phenomenon [1], but it is ably done here. The author spends a great deal of time here cultivating his audience. He assumes, probably rightly, that the majority of readers will be contrarian thinkers of just the sort to convert to his idea of red teaming organizations and institutions in order to improve them. The ideal red teamer, as the author discusses over and over again, is someone who combines a sharp mind, a critical temperament, and a strong dose of skepticism and even pessimism with friendliness and warmth and an ability to work well with others. To be sure, this is a complicated picture, but a friendly and skeptical person does make for a person complicated enough to take the counsel of the author to heart that a red teamer must be a devil's advocate, but be on the side of the good, and who must care enough about institutions to be willing to subject them to scrutiny and to criticize misguided plans with the aim of making them stronger. This is by no means a simple matter, but it is a worthwhile goal.

In a little under 200 pages the author manages to discuss red teaming in a very thorough way that manages to convey both the promise that it holds as well as the fact that it remains somewhat novel when applied to businesses. That said, the author manages to get a great deal of mileage out of commenting on the sort of logical fallacies that red teaming helps organizations overcome and in discussing the use of red teaming techniques in the Israeli and American and British militaries as well as the Roman Catholic Church, whose office of devil's advocate is among the more notable examples of the phenomenon in contemporary institutions. The book begins with some hard lessons about the absence of contrarian thinking from the US military, and then progresses to an introduction of red teaming, its psychology, and various ways to start taking advantage of contrarian thinking within an organization. After discussing the problems of fallacious thinking and the solution to an overreliance on bad heuristics through slowing down the mind enough to look at evidence and sound data, the author spends some time providing analytical techniques to question the unquestionable, imaginative techniques to think the unthinkable, contrarian techniques to challenge everything, and advice on how to put these tools together, know the rules of being a resident contrarian, and providing encouragement to readers to go out and be a part of the revolution of contrarian thinking as if we were not already, however unknown to ourselves, self-selected for that task through the quirks of birth and experience.

So, what makes this book so awesome? There are a few threads that combine together to make this such a pleasing book. For one, the book clearly knows its audience and aims this book straight at it. If you are going to be interested in a book on contrarian thinking that combines military strategy and business strategy, you have already put yourself in the place where this book is going to appeal to a combination of a desire to serve institutions and businesses while also being seen as smarter than the average bear. There are many people who would find a book like this to be tiresome and tedious, but if the thought of a book that encourages people to be witty and clever know-it-alls that criticize unsound reasoning while remaining polite and friendly and respectful, and working outside of the hierarchies that many organizations have sound appealing, this book will be just as amazing to you as it was to me. Whether or not the world is ready to handle the sort of contrarian thinkers this book encourages is a different matter altogether, but at least this author knows it is more important to give wise counsel to those who seek wisdom than to flatter those who wish to continue to reward failure and engage in groupthink.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2015...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2013...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2015...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2014...>

Lovely Loveday says

This book is a true business book that seeks to turn insights gained by the military to those which can be used by businesses who engage in only slightly less serious competition in hostile environments. Most companies believe that if it does not need to be fixed then not fix it which in some cases can lead to huge problems in the future. Any business needs to be well prepared and think ahead of all the what if's that can come with any business. This book is a business tool that can help teach and guide you to prevent most issues that can occur in the future if you have not taken the proper measurements to avoid this event. I feel this book would make a great read for any business that wants to be well rounded and prepared.

Via Bella says

You can read the full review here but I actually really enjoyed this book. The history was insightful and really related to business and how we can all utilise the information. Definitely not a sit and read for fun book but a good read.

Read the full review here: <http://viabella-thebeautifullife.blog...>

Gooshe Net says

Red teaming works. It works for small California tech start-ups and Japanese sovereign wealth funds. It works for old, iconic corporations and innovative disruptors. It works for nonprofits (NGO) and hedge funds. and it can work for your company, too, if you let it.

Lisa says

Unique and valuable

Fantastic new "old" way of looking at everything through a different lens. Already beginning to apply some of these ideas!

Nancy says

Your Project from a Poorly Conceived Plan

Red teaming isn't perfect, but used well it can save your project. The military, as Hoffman points out in the introduction, has a long history of using red teams. Recently their training program has been formalized. Hoffman was lucky to be allowed to attend a session to use the experience to bring red teaming to industry. Save

In addition to recounting the history of red teaming, Hoffman shares his experience in the military training course. This part of the book is filled with interesting anecdotes showing how red teaming, primarily in the military, has been used to save a planned troop exercise, or actual war situation.

In the second part of the book, Hoffman describes the tools used by the red team to facilitate critical thinking, come up with creative solutions, and stress the assumptions of the project to assure that all bases have been covered. He also describes the type of individuals best suited to red teaming. These need to be sharp people, good at critical thinking who are not easily cowed by upper management.

I loved the book. Having been involved in extensive projects in industry, I can see how valuable this type of exercise can be in relooking a proposed plan or project. Too often, the planners get so involved in how to make the plan work that they narrow their focus and miss the ways the plan or project can fail.

I highly recommend this book, if you're responsible for developing a plan in a large corporation, or if you own a business and want to assure the success of your plans for the future. It's important to realize that some of the techniques don't require large expenditures to be successful. Anyone can do it and with practice can become good at it.

I received this book from Blogging for Books for this review.

Jeff Kowalk says

A bit tedious at times, even though I am a natural devil's advocate. Many good strategies and practices.

Omar El-mohri says

Impressive book about the red teaming method that is used by CIA, US Army and many other military and corporations.

The idea is to have a team within the organization to question any plan, status quo and find the potential problems that can be faced, just like the troubles that Detroit automotive industry got into.

Full of methods and suggestion on how to apply the art of Red Teaming.

Becki Iverson says

Business books are only getting better and better these days, and Red Teaming falls right into that trend. This title caught my eye because my business has a process called red team right now on bids and I was intrigued if it came from this. It didn't (I don't think), but the idea is the same. On our red team calls everyone comes together to really critically assess each portion of the bid and question it to make it better. This book details the way that red teaming is used to critically assess serious projected scenarios in order to better plan for unforeseen problems.

I found a lot of the items in this book to be easily actionable and best of all free for most firms. All you need to conduct a red team is some paper, a group of willing participants, and the guidance you can find in this book. It just goes to show that sometimes the best business tool is just good old fashioned brain power. Fancy softwares and CRM systems are great but they don't mean much if you don't have a solid strategy to back them up. The primary examples and case studies used in red teaming are from the military and the automotive manufacturing industry, something I enjoyed a lot more than I thought I would.

Red Teaming is a great book for anyone looking to really shake up their company's (or life, you could do this on your personal life too in a microcosm of the original intent) structure and procedures and really re-think the way things are done. I'll definitely be keeping some of these strategies in my back pocket as I get to more leadership based roles!

Tom Donaghey says

RED TEAMING by Bryce G. Hoffman is yet another tool in the corporate toolbox. While the concept of red team vs. blue team has been a staple in the military for decades (you've heard of war games and seen "The Dirty Dozen"), I'm surprised that no one has written a translation for private use.

Well here it is. Many a company runs by the unspoken motto: IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT. This leads to sloppy thinking, self aggrandizement and just enough openings to let in a smoother, younger, more forward thinking company ready to take advantage of your sloth. Face it, you were that new company once, trying to out-think the stales of the industry. Now you're fat, happy, gone stale yourself, and are ready to fall. This is the bandage you need. The Devil's Advocate is something the Catholic Church has used for centuries and they're still around. Here are the concepts for getting your business back into a true leadership roll. Read this, go out an recruit some quality S2 or S3 Army officers, and get your edge back.
