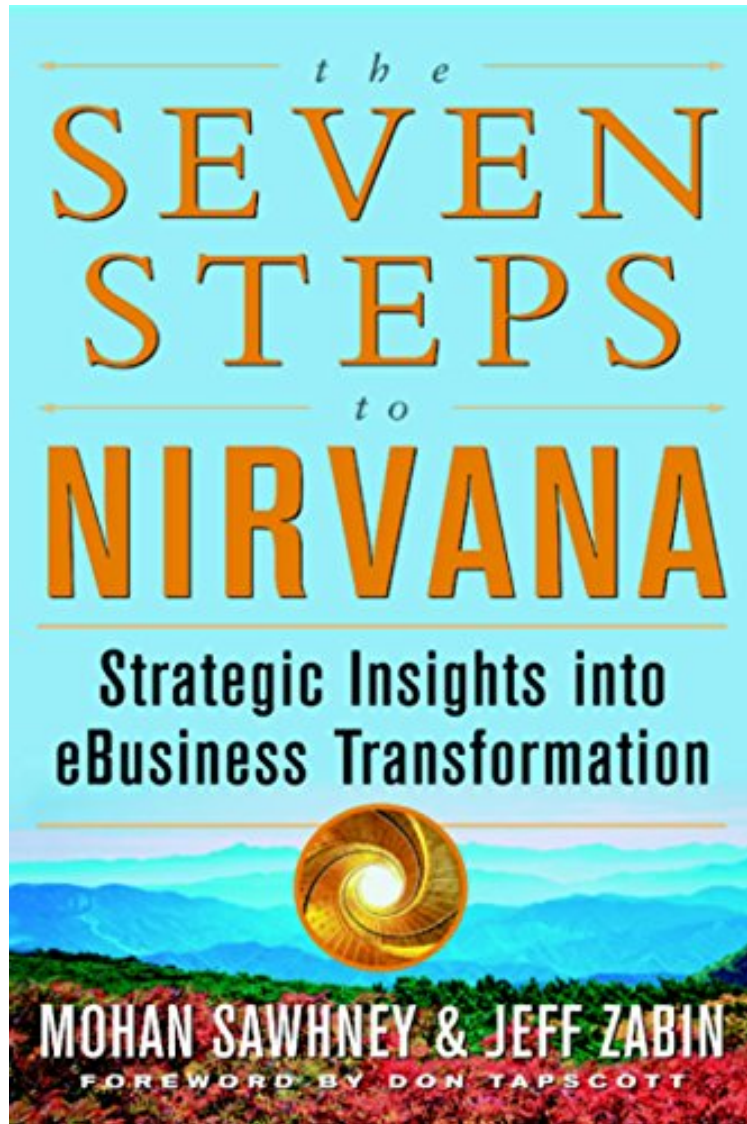


(Download) The Seven Steps to Nirvana: Strategic Insights into eBusiness Transformation

## The Seven Steps to Nirvana: Strategic Insights into eBusiness Transformation

*Mohan Sawhney, Jeff Zabin*  
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**Mohan Sawhney, Jeff Zabin : The Seven Steps to Nirvana: Strategic Insights into eBusiness Transformation** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Seven Steps to Nirvana: Strategic Insights into eBusiness Transformation:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Impressive "Big Picture" Thinking By A Customer At its heart, this book is about just how much impact the Internet is having - and will continue to have - on \*all\* companies, and how to plan and manage your e-business strategies. Sawhney and Zabin make a strong point that all organizations, whether

consciously or not, are becoming "e-organizations". They write that they consider this book to be more of a 'compass' than anything else - and it really is. (After all, surely it's better to go into this new e-world, walk down this new path, with some understanding - not just randomly like seeds blown in the wind, or like the random rantings of some who write \*cough\* book reviews \*cough\* on ...) And to me, the best part is that their compass unfailingly points in the direction of how to use the Internet to drive new revenues into a company's core business. This is a book for real-world managers - for executives and companies who want to use the power of "e" to not only cut costs but, even better, to accelerate top-line revenue growth. There are lots of specifics about strategic initiatives and choices executives can make to e-nergize all functions -- marketing, distribution, financial, IT, strategic, HR, and etc. The seven areas, 'or steps,' of transformation that they cover are a company's vision, evolution, strategy, synchronization, infrastructure, capitalization, and organization. While the infrastructure re-visioning step was a bit technical for me (a non-geek KM exec), the organizational re-visioning step was engaging and full of good ideas - I came away very inspired from that chapter in particular. And personally, the sprinkling of folkloric metaphors and stories throughout delighted me, and kept me focused on the 'big picture.' (But then, I'm a long-time subscriber to Parabola! And in a connected world, "wisdom" can be pulled and linked in many different ways. Their wisdom thinking is a unique, valuable aspect of this book - it's a tone too rarely encountered in other serious business books, IMO.) After all the craziness of the last 18 months, stepping back and taking a 'big picture' look at how the Internet is changing all businesses (especially such a smart and thoughtful look) was to me really refreshing.

23 of 26 people found the following review helpful. "General Principle" (that anyone can say) Book By Hiroo Yamagata This book came out at a difficult time, when NASDAQ fell and people realized that buying shares of firms that don't turn a profit isn't a good idea after all. So, this book tries to start off by saying that "Ah, we knew that all along!" and then trying to sell the existing industries the IT gospel. That's a hard position to maintain, and I think the book suffers from it. It resorts to saying that use of IT is crucial for existing firms, but the thing it offers is almost exactly the type of things that were touted in the pre-Internet days, where Toyota excelled with JIT systems, Kao used their IT advantage, 7-11 improved logistics by streamlining their suppliers... in short, what people used to call "strategic use of information systems" in those days. So, after all these Internet things, we're back to where we were 10 years ago, and the authors try to make it sound new, but it isn't. Another problem is their style. The authors say that in order to prevent the book from becoming outdated within a month, they have avoided placing case studies, and focused on the philosophy. But, this makes the whole book into a collection of general ideas, things that anyone can say, things you already read in Harvard Business Review or Businessweek a hundred times. They resort to a lot of quotes from zen or Buddha, or some folk story to make themselves sound profound. I don't know how it reads to an American, but for a Japanese like me, they stink. Since they don't site actual cases, they use only tiny newbits to illustrate the point, and you really don't get the whole picture. They say things like, "When firm A uses US \$3 billion for purchases, if IT can reduce that cost by only 1%, that's significant!" but they never show whether that 1% saving is likely to happen!! I also have to question their competence in judging technology. They claim that Sega dropped out of the game console business, because their Dreamcast console didn't adopt DVD. I seriously doubt that. Show me a game that uses the full capacity of DVD effectively. I don't think the authors understand the game console market, or the relation between technology and the market acceptance. Nice try, and there are some interesting points in the book. Also, my general disapproval of these management guides probably have a lot to do with this not-so-good review. But I can't say I'm very happy with this book.

11 of 14 people found the following review helpful. New book addresses e-business for old economy companies By Madanmohan Rao The Seven Steps to Nirvana: Strategic Insights Into e-Business Transformation by Mohan Sawhney and Jeff Zabin Review by Madanmohan Rao... With a foreword by Dan Tapscott (author of "Digital Capital" and "Growing Up Digital"), this concise e-business guidebook is just what serious readers need in the "post-dotcom era" to sift through the confusing views and assessments of e-business out there. Mohan Sawhney, e-commerce professor at the Kellogg Graduate School of Management in Northwestern University, is a prolific writer and speaker and serves on the boards of several startups; he was a keynote speaker at the India Internet World 2000 conference... Jeff Zabin is a writer and research fellow with strategy firm Diamond Cluster International in Evanston, Illinois. The book also has an online companion... Referenced books include Leading the Revolution (by Gary Hamel), Intellectual Capital (Thomas Stewart), MetaCapitalism (Grady Means), ValueNets (David Bovet), and Enterprise E-Commerce (Peter Fingar). The focus of the book by Sawhney and Zabin is more on the traditional old-economy "smokestack" industries than established technology players like Cisco and Dell. It is chock-full of case studies and anecdotes of successes as well as failures in e-business ventures of corporate America. One chapter each is devoted to the seven steps which businesses must take in order to maximize e-business potential: broaden company and industry vision, chart incremental moves down the e-business evolution path, devise clever e-strategy, synchronise channels and internal departments, gear up e-infrastructure platforms, judiciously allocate financial resources and investments, and rally employees and partners around the e-business banner. In retrospect, it might be said that the new economy was the best thing to have happened to the old economy, according to the authors, especially the shining examples they set for speed, innovation and pure adrenaline flow. "Unlike anything before it, the massive wave of entrepreneurial startups energized Corporate America to

change," they observe. E-business can play a key role in four ways: cost reduction, revenue expansion, time reduction, and relationship enhancement. E-business plays not just to the bottom line but also to the top line, where it can lead to the transformation and reinvention of entire industries. Companies like United Technologies and Eastman streamline purchasing via e-procurement. Citibank leverages CRM for online initiatives, and ProcterGamble uses Web sites to improve information services quality for its products like Tide, Crest and Vick's. Xerox harnesses the Web to lubricate its relationships with its numerous resellers. Consultancy firms and Fortune 500 innovators like GE use Intranet-based knowledge management systems to capture, codify and recycle the learnings gleaned from every project and every employee. One of the key impacts of the Internet, Intranet and Extranet is to break down traditional barriers within the company between its departments, geographical units and employees, and on the outside to connect the company seamlessly with its customers, suppliers, distributors and business partners. Companies have taken different approaches to achieve this synchronous state: for instance, Wal-Mart has named its online venture WalMart.com and opted for deep synchronization and integration, whereas K-Mart has called its online venture BlueLight.com which is synchronized at a selective level and is aimed at new customers with new offerings. The Net has multiple effects on channels and brands: channel augmentation (eg. direct selling by Cisco and Dell), brand augmentation (eg. Web sites of Ragu sauce and Crest toothpaste), channel proliferation (eg. book sales), and channel deconstruction (eg. Travelocity and Expedia). The vendor landscape -- which is experiencing rapid convergence -- includes players in MRO procurement (Ariba, CommerceOne), SCM (i2, Manugistics), collaborative design (Agile, NexPrise), content and catalogue management (Vignette), configurators (Trilogy), integrated marketplaces (Ariba, CommerceOne, Oracle, VerticalNet), direct sales (BroadVision, Intershop, OpenMarket), logistics (i2, Yantra, GoCargo), payment (Verisign, iEscrow), CRM (Siebel, Kana) and customer analytics (E.piphany, Cognos). Despite the unbridled enthusiasm for the Net as a channel for direct selling to customers that besets many companies, the fact remains that most selling still takes place through partners," according to Sawhney and Zabin. The future, according to the authors, lies in collaborative commerce via component-based architectures (as with HP's e-Speak and Microsoft's BizTalk) -- eventually creating "business operating systems" for entire industries, such as Covisint in the automobile industry, Exostar for aerospace, Transora for consumer packaged goods, and Elemica for chemicals. Due to a combination of fear and greed, many established players may have swung off course for some time on the investment front: such as Starbucks (which invested in Living.com, Kozmo.com, Cooking.com and TalkCity -- but has re-focused now) and Nordstrom (which took a \$20 million loss on Streamline.com). By investing in other start-ups, companies can gain access to "windows into the future, borrowing eyes and ideas from innovative entrepreneurs." Examples include Kraft Foods, which gained valuable learnings (if not earnings) about online impacts on grocery shopping via tie-ups with Webvan, NetGrocer, Peapod, Food.com and EthnicGrocer.com. Accenture Technology Ventures has invested in Asera, Jamcracker, Rivio and MarketSwitch. CEOs, CIOs and heads of operating units within a company have a key role to play in catalyzing, motivating, skilling and externalizing of e-business vision and capability. Notable leaders in this regard have included GE CEO Jack Welch, Boeing CEO Phil Condit, Eastman CEO Ernest Davenport, and McDonald's CEO Jack Greenberg. The ultimate compass in the e-business journey, the authors conclude, has to be nothing other than the customer value proposition...

Today's most successful companies never sit still. Even as they introduce their newest e-business initiatives, their next generation of improvements is already near completion. Traditional organizations -- especially larger, low-tech businesses -- must reinvent themselves if they are to hold their positions against these new business competitors. The Seven Steps to Nirvana leads managers through the systematic stages needed to transform traditional businesses -- regardless of their industries -- into fierce competitors. Combining hard-hitting analyses with case studies of businesses that made the transition, this concrete, practical tour de force opens readers' minds to: Essential differences between e-commerce and e-business The evolutionary stages of e-business intervention Strategies to overcome inertia and organize for speed Written by one of BusinessWeek's 25 most influential e-business innovators, The Seven Steps to Nirvana is a trove of innovative techniques for brick-and-mortar businesses to meet -- and overcome -- the challenges of today's faster, nimbler e-upstarts.

.com While some might find the title's promise of transcendental beatitude a trifle overreaching, The Seven Steps to Nirvana nonetheless provides some excellent insight into the design and implementation of an e-business game plan at "low-tech, smokestack" companies that have heretofore shied away from cyber-strategies. Mohan Sawhney, the McCormick Tribune Professor of Electronic Commerce and Technology at Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management, and Jeff Zabin, a consultant, writer, and speaker, have produced a thought-provoking yet practical entry point for senior managers and other leaders at these firms. The book progresses from creating an overarching initial vision and initiating other critical preliminary preparations to "putting your money where your mouth is, and getting people in the organization to embrace the oft-threatening new world of e-business." Particularly notable are sections on "thinking like an architect (to) open your mind to new possibilities for business

innovation" and mitigating channel conflict--or "dissension among the existing institutions"--by making sure the electronic enhancements you are about to append are truly synchronized complements to what you already have. The ideas behind it all are solid and, perhaps most commendably, are anchored to the needs of a real-world customer base. --Howard Rothman  
From Publishers Weekly  
Although sometimes hyperbolic, Sawhney, an influential professor at Northwestern's business school, and co-writer Zabin provide a comprehensive conceptual framework for conducting e-business that sets their effort apart from the summer's many similar books. Targeting senior management, the authors outline their seven steps (vision, evolution, strategy, synchronization, infrastructure, capitalization and organization) for leveraging a company's advantages. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.  
From Booklist  
Sawhney is a professor at Northwestern University. Speaking at the World Economic Forum, he said that "the pure-play online company is being exposed as a myth." Sawhney has made waves in academic circles by favoring industry publications like Business 2.0 and Red Herring over academic journals. Business Week named Sawhney one of its "e-biz 25" last May, calling him a "John Maynard Keynes for the Net age: A theorist ready to bet on his ideas." In Seven Steps, he admits to "paint[ing] many topics with broad brushstrokes," but he makes it clear that e-business and e-commerce are not synonymous. E-business is the "use of the Net, in combination with other network technologies and forms of electronic communication, to enable any type of business activity," and Sawhney offers a panoply of ideas for transforming existing businesses into e-businesses. David Rouse  
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