



Unleash Your Inner Company: Use Passion and Perseverance to Build Your Ideal Business

John Chisholm

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Discover Your Unique Advantages—Shape and Grow Them into a Successful Business

Unleash Your Inner Company provides an innovative, proven, step-by-step process for anyone who aspires to start and grow their own business. Author John Chisholm—president of the worldwide MIT Alumni Association—brings an insider’s view that distills three decades of successful, serial entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley. His book combines practical principles, entertaining anecdotes, deep insights, challenging exercises, and illuminating graphics to guide the reader in conceiving, designing, building, testing, and scaling up the ideal business for them.

Many books address passion in startups; only this book shows how to turn passion and perseverance into a loop of increasingly positive results. Aspiring entrepreneurs have more resources than they realize; *Unleash Your Inner Company* helps them discover those advantages. Readers learn how to accelerate their learning and how *different* is better than *better*. The book also advises the reader on what to look for in a cofounder, how to avoid competitors, when best to raise money, and what they can learn from Apple, Google, Facebook, Uber, and Pinterest.

Unleash Your Inner Company is the only book the reader will need, regardless of their background, industry, or continent, to start the business that best fits their skills, passions, goals, and opportunities—in short, the right business to start now.

Unleash Your Inner Company: Use Passion and Perseverance to Build Your Ideal Business Details

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From Reader Review Unleash Your Inner Company: Use Passion and Perseverance to Build Your Ideal Business for online ebook

Mike Mertens says

John Chisholm has written a very practical guide for developing an Entrepreneurial mindset. While the aim of the book is to determine “how to start the right business for you” – your ideal business, I believe anyone who wants to grow and unleash a more entrepreneurial approach to their life and career will benefit greatly from this book – I know I did.

The book is full of practical ideas and insights. He uses his real-world experience and provides and then details out a 10 step, iterative process for building your ideal business. It all starts with passion (an attitude) and persistence (a behavior) which are used to develop areas to explore, refine and build upon (creating positive feedback loops). There are great exercises at the end of the first chapter for either building on passions you already have or for discovering something you can be passionate about.

There are 26 chapters chock full of insights. Here are a few I would like to highlight as I am already putting them to use or found them inspirational:

- The future is in your STARS – this is an inventory of your resources and it stands for Skills, Technologies, Assets and Accomplishments, Relationships and Reputation and (inner) Strengths. I highly recommend building out a chart like the one in the book – it is very valuable to see all the items one has to leverage.
- Choosing a co-founder and team Members – I am actively using this in building out a team for my new role in a large corporation. There are some great points on the importance of character, fit with your STARS, and alignment with your mission. He emphasizes that every hire matters, the importance of cognitive diversity and building a whole-brained team. A great idea he shares: “Every time you meet someone both passionate and perseverant about any activity, even if different than your own, take note.”
- The Ethics of Entrepreneurship. He notes that “to succeed as an entrepreneur, you need to create positive sum interactions with all of your stakeholders.” Those who create value and abundance (eliminating scarcity) through positive sum interactions are ethical. Those who take positive sum situations and reduce them to zero-sum or negative sum are the ones who are unethical. He properly calls out the “Adam Smith rules” for achieving abundance: free trade, light regulation, light taxes, protection of private property, and sound currency. Creating positive-sum organizations is what we all should be striving for.

I loved reading this book and working through the exercises at the end of each chapter. I give it my highest recommendation as I found it to be one of the best business and mindset books I have ever read. I hope that it receives the wide readership that it truly deserves.

Additional Points:

- I received an advanced laser printed copy of the book to review (I do not know the author personally) and I benefited greatly by being able to both read the book and do a lot of the exercises prior to writing this review. The book is so good that I have ordered a hardcover copy
- His chapter on Frugality is excellent and ties in well with the power of focusing on what is important. Readers who want more on this topic may want to look at Greg McKeown’s book “Essentialism” which I found helpful as well
- I took over 8 hand-written pages of notes as well as making margin notes - this is a book to work with actively

Valeria Luna says

I've daydreamed about starting my own company for years. At the same, I've always felt extremely overwhelmed by the complexity of such a venture. There are so many things to consider and unfortunately many areas in which you can make mistakes which could prove to be fatal for the business.

John Chisholm's book is the first I've encountered which outlines a straightforward and detailed process for building your company. Starting my business will still be a huge challenge, but I now know which are the different steps I need to take, as well as the potential sticking points I need to be on the lookout for on each stage.

I'd recommend any first time entrepreneur to check John Chisholm's book, it will provide you with highly valuable level of clarity.

Christine Peterson says

Unleash Your Inner Company is chock full of hard-won wisdom that can save you years of work and prevent fatal mistakes in your business. Throughout the book, I kept thinking "if only I'd known this years ago!" To take just one example, the chapter on selecting co-founders and team members is must-reading for anyone in any business, small or large. In fact, the selection principles apply directly to any project, and even to personal relationships including marriage. Anyone trying to make a difference in the world, for-profit or non-profit, will immediately benefit from reading this book.

Sasha says

First I would like to state that I have received this book through the Goodreads giveaway in exchange for an honest review.

I would like to thank the author for giving me this opportunity and honor in being able to read this book. The thing about this guide for entrepreneurs is that you do not have to have the slightest idea what your business would be about at the beginning of this book. The author walks you through every step of the startup, requiring only the ability to become passionate about something and persistence.

There were many visuals along with graphs throughout this book, there were also question and then some answer segments. Also questions without the answer segments which was designed to help you develop your own startup. This may not be a book for everyone it is definitely a book for those that are looking to start up their own company. This book has its niche. I would suggest that if you are looking into starting your own company you might like to get this book and give it a read. It has sure shed some light on things for me. It was a very informative read and a must.

Jeff Hall says

Entrepreneurship can be a long, lonely and arduous trek into the unknown. It's easy to get lost along the way as one sorts through all the possible paths forward.

Thankfully, there's a new roadmap available in the form of "Unleash Your Inner Company," written by entrepreneur John Chisholm. *Unleash*

Silicon Beach often looks to Silicon Valley for insights as to what might come next. What kinds of deals are getting funded now? What's new in technology? Chisholm, a tested Silicon Valley tech veteran, has started (and sold) two online survey companies – one to Google, another to Qualtrics. Chisholm now runs a fund that invests in startups.

Entrepreneurs may be passionate dreamers and salespeople, but Chisholm makes clear that building a successful company requires more than a "build it and they will come" belief in the future. Passion must be combined with persistence – and then attention must be paid to building a foundation that's strong on logic – and the basics.

Toward that end, Chisholm's book combines an "MBA in a Bottle" with self-help advice that forces the reader to dig deeply into his or her own psyche, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. Thinking through what could happen tomorrow – the good, bad and the ugly – allows the reader to prepare today.

For example, just because something is a great market opportunity doesn't mean it's a good fit with the individual considering that opportunity. The ideal company for an individual to start is unique to that individual. Chisholm's framework shows the reader how to find the opportunities that best fit their skills, passions, knowledge, relationships, and other key assets; recognize and avoid competitors; pick the right partners; and choose the best opportunity overall.

Your mind is one of those key assets, and Chisholm says it's important to never say anything bad about oneself. He's not worried about what others will think; he's worried about what he calls your most important audience: your unconscious mind. Besides, any weakness or adversity can be turned into a strength, he argues.

And then there are all the numbers. For non-MBA types, Chisholm's chapters on finance are a must; for the more financially astute, "Unleash" offers an excellent refresher course. "Unleash" offers a healthy respect for all this, for failure to watch over the basics can undermine a potentially great idea. The converse is of course also true: Getting the basics right lays the foundation for potential greatness.

Chisholm also employs real-world examples to instruct – and inspire action. His two companies faced plenty of ups and downs along the way. Frugality alone – often in short supply in today's startup world – can be a company-saving strategy when the inevitable downturn occurs. "Unleash" requires the reader to pay attention and think it all through.

Chisholm explains it all in very plain English, accompanied by charts and graphs that help the reader visualize what is being said. At the end of each chapter are exercises that help the reader lock down lessons learned.

We live in go-go times with abundant dreams of ideas-sketched-out-on-napkins turning into quick riches.

But Chisholm points out that this is more the exception than the rule. Chisholm says entrepreneurs should not waste valuable time trying to raise money for ideas that aren't quite ready for prime time. Much time can be lost pursuing money that rarely comes when a concept is still in the idea stage.

Instead, the entrepreneur should focus his or her energy on doing whatever it takes in order to show real traction and attract customers actually willing to pay for a company's goods or services. That's what will draw investor attention, argues Chisholm.

Once the entrepreneur climbs this first big mountain – showing that what the entrepreneur has is real – then there will be many more mountains to climb after that. Maybe the company is, at this later stage, finally ready raise money. "Unleash" offers tips on how to go about negotiating that part of the journey.

But Chisholm's focus is less on fundraising and exit strategies – and much more about asking all the right questions before taking the very first step. Chisholm says entrepreneurs make societal progress possible. So he's all in favor of people taking the entrepreneurial leap.

"Unleash" simply shows entrepreneurs how and where to look before they do. To learn more, go to: www.unleashyourinnercompany.com.

Martin Siniawski says

In this book, John Chisholm offers something that would've been essential in my years as an entrepreneur: a robust end-to-end framework for company building.

This book will be extremely useful for first time entrepreneurs, as it will help them avoid many costly mistakes. Seasoned veterans of the startup trenches will also derive a lot of value by reading it, finding new and more rigorous ways of thinking about what they've been doing over the years.

Being able to access to John Chisholm's three decades of experience as an entrepreneur is truly a privilege. I'm grateful for him having taken the time to share his invaluable learnings with the world.

José Antonio Lopez says

As times turn harder more and more people are considering starting their own businesses, *Unleash Your Inner Company* is a timely contribution and a required read for those serious about it.

In *Unleash your Inner Company* the successful entrepreneur **John Chisholm** shares his experience to all those who want to be entrepreneurs as well.

John's book is easy to read, fun to follow and provides very useful training. He lays out a 10 step process to think, organize and make your ideas coherent. Beginning from the more simple but fundamental question of what you love and what you are good for, up to creating a full strategy with pricing, differentiation, escalation, financials, etc. The road map works like a blueprint, to build from the ground up, from the basics to the complex. In addition to the framework itself, John takes the reader by the hand clarifying his ideas with examples (some from his personal experience, others are made up yet very concise), suggesting

exercises to put the concepts into practice, and FAQ's sections that expand each step further. At the end of each step a short recap becomes a cheat sheet of lessons learned.

In addition to his model, John introduces basic but powerful economic concepts to the entrepreneur. Sort of a reality check for the entrepreneur to be aware of non-business related challenges. Among these ideas we find the importance of institutions to create the environment for ideas to flourish, the damaging effects of centrally controlled regulations on innovation, and the ethics of entrepreneurship as a value creating endeavor.

In the last sections of the book, John adds some useful tools such as 101 accounting, and the relationship of his 10-step model and the popular Business Model Canvas.

John explains that he took the challenge of writing this book after he presented at TEDxUFM in 2011. It is a satisfaction to see an idea materialize.

Federico Fernández says

If you're looking for inspiration and practical advice to become a successful entrepreneur, read *Unleash Your Inner Company*. It will help you understand how you can combine passion and perseverance to take your future into your own hands.

The author, John Chisholm, provides you useful guidance and perspective. The book is structured in a way you can easily follow, a ten-step process centered on finding your own passions, looking for customer needs in those areas, finding the solutions you can provide to them, examining your own resources and advantages, and finally launching and scaling up your own start-up. It shows you how to achieve freedom, independence, and to live your life doing what you love.

One of the most stimulating parts of the book is right at the beginning, when the author emphasizes the importance of passion and perseverance. As you discover how to combine them, working on your business becomes easier and more natural. The positive feedback loop of passion and perseverance is what makes magic happen.

Reading this book will let you understand, among other things, how to spot real customer needs, and how to satisfy the gap between your customer's current state and preferable state. The book helps you not to give up in the face of difficulties, and shows you how to use your limited resources as an advantage.

Chisholm explains how to focus on your resources, called STARS: Skills, Technologies, Assets and accomplishments, Relationships and reputation, and Strengths (as in inner strengths). You learn how you are already a technologist. You'll also learn how to protect, develop, and leverage your mind, and how to live and work with little money.

You'll learn how important it is to be different, because different is better than better. You learn how to find the right cofounder and build a team with cognitive diversity. You also learn about how to deal with regulations that can block you, and how common law is better for progress and society than civil law.

Throughout every chapter you'll find plenty of rich examples. Many of those examples are from Chisholm's personal career, such as when he survived the tragedy of the dot-com bust and what he learned from it. In

addition, Q&A at the end of the chapters answer some of the questions you might have thought about while reading the previous pages.

After reading this book you'll also know how to price your product, get a business loan, and raise capital, with an emphasis in modern-day sources of financing such as crowdfunding. This book can help you either become an entrepreneur or be a more successful one.

Chisholm finishes the book saying why entrepreneurship is ethical, quoting Adam Smith. He'll inspire you to make the world better.

"Unleash your inner company," by John Chisholm, Greenleaf Book Group Press, u\$s 21.15, 413 pages, available on Amazon

Leisa Michelle says

Full disclosure, I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Overall, this was a great read. If you want to start a business, but you don't know how or when or what's involved, read this book. It's basically a blueprint to success. If you're new to entrepreneurship and don't really have interest in starting your own business right this minute (like me), it could still be an interesting read. But know that it's very practical and action-oriented. That said, I still enjoyed it and feel like I have a lot more insight into how businesses are run.

The impression I got from *Unleash Your Inner Company* is that it could be an entrepreneurship textbook for the 21st century. It's very thorough, very well-written, and pretty thought-provoking. The author really knows his stuff. If you're new to the world of business and entrepreneurship, especially if you're a college-aged kid that's considered or considering starting a business, you'll find this book valuable.

Usually when I read business books, I think, "Yeah, yeah, okay, next." They feel repetitive. A lot of the time, I feel like a 300 page book can be condensed into a 2k word blog post and not much would be lost. But this book was refreshingly different. Not repetitive at all. Chisholm made a couple points in every chapter, and then he'd move along. I loved the conciseness.

Each chapter had exercises and a bullet list of "core lessons" at the end. I'm not one for doing exercises, but I love summaries. The core lessons part of each chapter was a major highlight, and a lot of those bullet points made their way into my "Entrepreneurship Essentials" notebook in Evernote. Really valuable.

At the beginning of the book, Chisholm insists that any passion can be turned into a business. He uses this Q&A format to answer all potential objections and concerns the reader might have about their passion being profitable. He also talks about the correlation between passion and perseverance and how those two qualities lead to success.

An offhand comment in an early chapter that I loved was the distinction between solving the problem of a customer vs the marketplace. That's something I've never thought of before. And another comment was made in the middle of the book about seeing a lack of resources as an advantage. Lacking resources means you have to think and act more quickly and more thoughtfully. Really valuable insight.

Unleash Your Inner Company delved into the nitty gritty of HOW you run a successful company. Everything from gaging product-market fit to who you should work with to how to get funding. It was extremely thorough and extremely concise, had lots of interesting exercises, and as previously mentioned, most chapters ended with a nice summary.

Zachary C says

Unleash Your Inner Company (UYIC) is a true gem in a genre too often dominated by mediocre books.

UYIC is part self-help and part rigorous step-by-step guide through the concrete process of starting a company. UYIC straddles these genres marvelously by avoiding the airy platitudes of the average self-help book and the inaccessibility of jargon-filled tomes on business development. Chisholm's text is superior even to classic entrepreneurial guides like Ries' *The Lean Startup* or Steve Blanks' *The Startup Owners Manual*.

Here's why.

Rather than beginning with an abstract "customer need" and building outward, Chisholm begins with the entrepreneur him/herself. Yes, your product must fit a customer need, but your ideal business grows best from your own humanity: your strengths and interests – the things that make you, uniquely, you.

The early portion of UYIC asks the reader to look within and take stock of their strengths and passions. Only then can an entrepreneur be well-equipped to face the challenges of building a business. Great products come from courageous and authentic people: not an abstract customer development model. The hands-on elements of developing your business can't be divorced from the development of yourself – this logical fusion of personal and professional is the great service that Chisholm has provided with UYIC.

The latter chapters are increasingly technical, covering topics the range from prototyping 'minimum viable solutions' to pricing strategies. UYIC is not a lightweight text: chapters are rich with diagrams and actionable steps for product development and finance. Chisholm's crystal clear writing really shines and the short, digestible chapters keep you turning the page. Along the way, Chisholm touches upon too-often-neglected areas like choosing good co-founders and the power of focus. The chapter on frugality is brilliant: no one will walk away from it without reconsidering their spending habits.

Finally, Chisholm closes with sophisticated essays on the destructiveness of overregulation. (Ever ask yourself why entrepreneurship is so focused on apps? Because innovation is smothered in so many other areas of the economy.) UYIC ends with the ethics of entrepreneurship, which connects the nuts and bolts from earlier in the book with a coherent philosophy and worldview. All progress depends on how we can move the world from one of negative or zero-sum relationships (where some people always lose) to a world of positive-sum relationships (where exchange and cooperation improve everyone's life). Who makes the world more positive-sum? Entrepreneurs. There's poetry in Chisholm's selection of ethics as the end of the book. As you cultivate your own passion and persevere to grow a business from it, you're also a servant of social progress and humanity's highest goals.

I was impressed with how Chisholm's knowledge of complex systems theory shines throughout the text. (The pioneering Santa Fe Institute is even mentioned on the dedication page). Fans of systems theory will be thrilled by the way that Chisholm models evolutionary 'combinatorial systems' like technology in a concrete way that entrepreneurs can not only understand but actually use to generate business ideas.

We will undoubtedly give Unleash your Inner Company to the students in our program's entrepreneurship classes. Highly recommended.

Kristina Aziz says

I got this book through a goodreads giveaway. Normally I'd rate a book lower if it doesn't pertain to my life. But the cool thing about this field guide for entrepreneurs is that you don't even have to have the slightest idea what your business would be about at the start of this book. Chisholm walks you through literally every step of the startup, requiring only the ability to become passionate about something and persistence.

I did enjoy the many visuals and graphs throughout the book, along with question and answer segments and question without answer segments designed to help you develop your startup. While still not quite a book for everyone, definitely an important book within its niche.

3.5/5
