



The Responsible Company: What We've Learned from Patagonia's First 40 Years

Yvon Chouinard, Vincent Stanley

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The Responsible Company , by Yvon Chouinard, founder and owner of Patagonia, and Vincent Stanley, co-editor of its Footprint Chronicles, draw on the their 40 years' experience at Patagonia – and knowledge of current efforts by other companies – to articulate the elements of responsible business for our time.

Patagonia, named by *Fortune* in 2007 as the coolest company on the planet, has earned a reputation as much for its ground-breaking environmental and social practices as for the quality of its clothes. In this exceptionally frank account, Chouinard and Stanley recount how the company and its culture gained the confidence, by step and misstep, to make its work progressively more responsible, and to ultimately share its discoveries with companies as large as Wal-Mart or as small as the corner bakery. In plain, compelling prose, the authors describe the current impact of manufacturing and commerce on the planet's natural systems and human communities, and how that impact now forces business to change its ways. *The Responsible Company* shows companies how to reduce the harm they cause, improve the quality of their business, and provide the kind of meaningful work everyone seeks. It concludes with specific, practical steps every business can undertake, as well as advice on what to do, in what order. This is the first book to show companies how to thread their way through economic sea change and slow the drift toward ecological bankruptcy. Its advice is simple but powerful: reduce your environmental footprint (and its skyrocketing cost), make legitimate products that last, reclaim deep knowledge of your business and its supply chain to make the most of opportunities in the years to come, and earn the trust you'll need by treating your workers, customers and communities with respect.

The Responsible Company: What We've Learned from Patagonia's First 40 Years Details

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Melissa West says

Must read for anyone who cares about our planet.

Mike says

Nice tool kit and case study for how making your business sustainable should be even more important than profit. Incredible checklist at the end for companies to enact some of the teachings here too.

Olivier Cruchant says

some nice actionable tips and interesting stories. Sometimes a little vague though; and a little bit too short to be remembered

Karla says

Thank you to Yvon Chouinard and Vincent Stanley for finally saying what every company, what every business, what every entrepreneur needs to hear. There are myriad ways to run a more responsible company -- responsible to the environment, responsible to the customers, responsible to the employees -- and still -- as evidenced by Patagonia -- make a profit. This book overflows with concrete, do it today details. I learned so much that I can apply to my own business, the most important being to actually reflect on my practices instead of just doing what everyone else does. A great book that will begin an important dialogue and lead us to the future. If you only read one business book this year, make it this one.

Takashi says

Everybody should read this book.

All we live use earth resources but there are decreasing year after year so we have to change our lifestyle. This book show us the way what patagonia has been done and should we do to reduce earth's damage as we can.

Guillaume Belanger says

Inspiring but pragmatic and practical. Do the right thing!

Mary says

This was a pretty good sequel to 'Surfing' and just about as inspiring. Choinard reminds us that regardless of what we're doing in our lives we have a responsibility to make it right, whether that be the workers who make our products or the raw materials that go into them. Do we embrace a cradle to grave philosophy in our product lifecycle? Are the people that create and manufacture our products made to feel successful and secure? What about our customers? Does our product satisfy the needs that they were seeking? The book opens our eyes these and other sustainable questions that we might not otherwise think about. Choinard is humble, he admits that in the beginning they (Patagonia) didn't either but are now constantly challenging each other with possible better ways to make their products.

What if we were to step back and assess the impact our decisions make on the lives of others and our planet? Would we change our ways? After reading this book (and Surfing) I know I will. I hope you will too.

Bailey Urban says

This was a short book about what it means for a company to be responsible and sustainable. There were certainly some salient points on the topic of social impact. Moreover, the author did about as decent of a job as possible of it not being just a Patagonia love fest, especially considering this book is typically only sold in their stores.

However, it was still rather dry and could have more stories from outside of Patagonia to bolster the argument and feasibility of the impact of having a "triple bottom line." I still learned a good amount, but if someone wanted to know the highlights, they could just flip through my copy and read what I highlighted and get the gist in about 5 minutes.

Nonetheless, I'm grateful I read it.

Lucy says

Vstupujeme do fáze post-konzumní společnosti, protože ekonomika založená pouze na spotřebě pěžila sebe i své základní principy - už neposkytuje dostatek dobré placených pracovních míst a kromě toho si otravuje vlastní studnu. Kniha je příkladem že to může být i jinak. Prvních 122 stránek je super, ale lepší je příloha s praktickými pokyny "doporučený seznámení". Inspirativní knížka.

Renee says

Great advice on moving companies forward

Ben says

Good insight into having an environmentally responsible company, but not as generally applicable as would have liked for non-clothing companies seeking to have a positive impact.

LuckyYogi says

Opened my eyes about how not only Patagonia carries out their business, but how the clothing industry has quite an impact on our natural resources...

I used to be biased against Patagonia just based on what I see, what is marketed as their image. In my opinion, Patagonia really doesn't market enough toward mountaineers. My friend let me borrow this book and I was open to it. I now have an appreciation for the company as a whole.

Andrew Westphal says

This book is not much more than the pale shadow cast by Chouinard's book "Let My People Go Surfing" in the florescent lighting of a business-school classroom.

The checklists at the end of the book are a helpful resource for (aspiring) enviros to bring these topics of sustainability to their own workplaces, but it was generally a letdown as I progress through Patagonia's 3-volume library set.

Mark Peterson says

If you are serious about making your company more responsible to the environment and your employees, The Responsible Company is the book you should read. In the book, Yvon Chouinard makes the point that "Companies, not individuals, generate 75 % of the trash that reaches the landfill or incinerator. [Moreover], 90% of a product's environmental impact is determined at the design stage."

Chouinard takes you a product lifecycle journey detailing how difficult it is to truly measure the environmental impact of a product in a global economy. As I do in my book, Guerrillapreneur, Chouinard challenges executives to integrate the environmental impact caused by their companies into their on-going business plans. However, Chouinard shows that a "responsible" company can not only implement these changes, the company can do so and reduce operating costs. The book includes templates and a change roadmap that companies can use to start their own journey.

This book is a MUST read for every MBA student.

Jen says

Just started reading this one because I really enjoyed Let My People Go Surfing, and Yvon Chouinard is one of my heroes. One of the reasons is that he is not afraid to scrutinize his company, his industry, and his own products in pursuit of greater responsibility. In the book, he and coauthor Vincent Stanley give compelling examples of how these tough questions can not just lead to doing GOOD, but also to doing WELL (more profit). They readily admit that Patagonia isn't perfect, that no company is, but it's critical to work toward the more sustainable end of the continuum and share knowledge so we can all improve.

Lots of favorite quotes so far, including the following on pages 26-27: "Poke your nose into any store in the mall and look around. Much of what we produce to sell to each other to earn our living is crap... Every piece of crap, because it was manufactured, contains within it something of the priceless: applied human intelligence, for one, natural capital for another... We're wasting our brains and our only world on the design, production, and consumption of things we don't need and that aren't good for us."
