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The Last American CEO



Synopsis

Sex, lies, conflicts of interest, international intrigue, and a double-cross of thousands of union employees in the heart of America. Add to that three major company's futures on the line and an assassination by anarchist terrorists in Paris of one of the company's chairman, in front of his screaming daughter, that almost killed a deal to save at least two of the companies. Hollywood? No. This was real. The Last American CEO is the ultimate insider's view of one of the biggest global business deals in history: Chrysler's 1987 purchase of American Motors Corporation (AMC) from French automaker Renault. Relevant today? Yes. The jewel of the acquisition was Chrysler acquiring the Jeep brand, which almost single-handedly saved Chrysler from near-bankruptcy in the early 1990s and certainly allowed Chrysler to survive a real bankruptcy in 2009. Joe Cappy was the last CEO of AMC and Jason Vines became his young PR guy and went on to become the PR chief for Nissan, Ford, and Chrysler, all during times of turmoil.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The publisher gave me a free copy of this book and my review is from the prospective of a former auto industry insider. The saga of the true story of The Last American CEO reads more like a James Bond novel than a "business book". Cappy is Bond in a corporate life setting, dealing with murder, deceit, sex, back stabbing, foreign intrigue and the herculean task of keeping AMC afloat. Just when Cappy navigates his way through the storms, he finds out that Lee Iacocca's famous line....."If you can find a better car, buy it" had a meaning that would change Cappy's fate, the fate of AMC and the future of an industry icon.....JEEP The tale is told with the incomparable humor of Jason Vines

making a book you can not put down

I recommend this book to anyone interested in the workings of the automobile industry in this country. It is a must read for anyone that worked for AMC or an AMC dealership plus those with Chrysler at the time. I was there at AMC during this time. I can tell you from my perspective it is spot on. I worked with many of the individuals in the book both at AMC and later at Chrysler. I was fortunate enough to have been picked up by Chrysler and had a great career with both companies. Joe hit it when he talked about the diversity of experience that the AMC staff had. When I went to Chrysler, my first assignment came with an apology. They told me that they were sorry but that was all of the resources that they had to allocate to me to complete the assignment. I took one look at what they gave me and had never had anywhere near these resources. I told them that I thought that I could make it work and over delivered. The AMC experience taught you how to work with less money, less people and be really creative. It served me well. Joe and Jason delivered the goods with a good story that was interesting and moved along. Thanks guys!

This book spends too much space detailing exactly who attended which meeting, at which hotel or corporate headquarters, in which city, accompanied by which legal firm. It also gets hung up on personalities rather than strategies. It is a collection of corporate trivia at its worst. It spends too much time on arcane topics like the legal responsibilities of the AMC board of directors. Buried in this avalanche of minutiae are the bones of two interesting stories; the career of Joe Cappy and the history of AMC in the 1980s. Neither gets the detail it deserves. The book needs a list of characters, organization charts, and a timeline to keep everything straight. It also needs basic hard data like unit sales, market share, number of dealers, etc. The small black and white illustrations are grouped in a 24 pages section and consist mainly of head shots of executives and catalog photos of various cars and Jeeps.

The publishing company gave me a free copy of this book. What a great story! I felt like I was riding along in the backseat as the story of American Motors and its sale to Chrysler unfolded. I was struck by the savvy and energy that Joe needed to keep a company going through the turmoil of the tough auto industry. But I also burst out laughing at many of the tales of human foibles that Jason and Joe recounted. This book is a very enjoyable read!

I got an advance copy of this book from the publisher. It was fascinating from beginning to end. I

could visualize the documentary with the history shown in photos and film of the cars and locations and important figures in the auto industry. I hope that is coming next. I never realized how complicated and compelling the inner workings of the auto industry could be.

I was fascinated by Cappy's story of intrigue and suspense at American Motors and Chrysler. I read Cappy and Vine's book in one sitting, as if I was personally living Joe's problems and achievements. Joe met his disappointments and successes as instructive steps to a larger goal. Anyone with an interest in the workings of corporate management -- particularly in the auto industry -- will discover in Joe Cappy a champion of hard work and bulldog tenacity that permitted his exceptional wisdom and salesmanship to bring about major accomplishment for his company and himself.

This book was a fun read. It is a no holds barred narrative on the history of AMC, Renault and Chrysler in the 80's and 90's. It is a great behind the scenes view of corporate America, international business and some of the challenges that occur as two cultures are trying to do business together with all the accompanying intrigue and craziness inherent in such corporate relationships. I remember the Jeep products and the AMC products but did not know the behind the scenes story which is laid out really well in this book in a very entertaining and fast moving way. 5 Stars!Scott

The publishing company gave me a free copy of this book and this is my review. I found that Joe Cappy, the last American CEO, and Jason Vines give a fascinating look at the U.S. car industry and at American Motors in particular during times of growth and of turmoil. This is an important read for true car lovers who want an insider's look at what went right and what went wrong at American Motors leading up to its acquisition by Chrysler. As an incidental bonus, the book also includes an interesting and informative look at the beginning of the American car industry.

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