



Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul

By Howard Schultz, Joanne Gordon

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In 2008, Howard Schultz decided to return as the CEO of Starbucks to help restore its financial health and bring the company back to its core values. In *Onward*, he shares this remarkable story, revealing how, during one of the most tumultuous economic periods in American history, Starbucks again achieved profitability and sustainability without sacrificing humanity.

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- Sales Rank: #28196 in eBooks
- Published on: 2012-03-27
- Released on: 2012-03-27
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, April 2011: *Onward* is not a puff piece. In just under 400 brisk pages, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz details the multitude of factors--the recession, new consumer behavior, overexpansion--that led to the company's downturn during 2007-2008. Obviously, Schultz was successful, and his book has plenty of valuable lessons about management and leadership--standard features for most business books. But the most interesting thing about *Onward* is Schultz's honesty about the whole process, from his determination to make difficult personnel changes to his admission that he considers it a personal failure when he sees someone with a competitor's cup of coffee. Schultz even makes the chapters about his agonies over the company's breakfast sandwiches a fascinating study in the minute decisions that go into running a multibillion-dollar company. Conflicts, raw emotions, high stakes: *Onward* is a business book that goes beyond feel-good maxims and actually has a story to tell. --Darryl Campbell

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In 2000, Starbucks' founder and CEO Schultz (Pour Your Heart into It) stepped down from daily oversight of the company and assumed the role of chairman. Eight years later, in the midst of the recession and a period of decline unprecedented in the company's recent history, Schultz--feeling that the soul of his brand was at risk--returned to the CEO post. In this personal, suspenseful, and surprisingly open account, Schultz traces his own journey to help Starbucks reclaim its original customer-centric values and mission while aggressively innovating and embracing the changing landscape of technology. From the famous leaked memo that exposed his criticisms of Starbucks to new product strategies and rollouts, Schultz bares all about the painful yet often exhilarating steps he had to take to turn the company around. Peppered with stories from his childhood in tough Canarsie, N.Y., neighborhoods, his sequel to the founding of Starbucks is grittier, more gripping, and dramatic, and his voice is winning and authentic. This is a must-read for anyone interested in leadership, management, or the quest to connect a brand with the consumer. (Mar.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Schultz is the founder and CEO of Starbucks, a company that began as a small Seattle distributor of coffee beans and ground coffee that he transformed into what it is today, inspired by the espresso shops he visited in Italy. Schultz described the founding of Starbucks in his first book, *Pour Your Heart into It* (1997). Written with Joanne Gordon, a former *Forbes* writer and contributing editor, this account is a spotlight on the period of 2007-2008, when the company lost some of its vision due to overexpansion and the pressure to maintain unabated growth. Seeing that Starbucks was becoming a victim of its own success, Schultz returned to the CEO position after eight years away from overseeing daily operations of the company. He details the struggle to maintain the identity of Starbucks while attempting to branch out into areas such as music sales and hot food, facing competition and the oversaturation that caused the company the painful closing of about 600 stores in 2008. This is one of those turnaround stories that illustrates that a company can overcome its growth pains by returning to its core principles. --David Siegfried

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tara Wilson:

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